

**A STUDY OF VIOLENCE AS A LITERARY TECHNIQUE IN THE POETRY
OF GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE**

by

IAN WILLIAM REVIE

**PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

October 1972



SUMMARY OF THESIS

The thesis is a study of the development of a poetic technique and its increasing importance in the evolution of Apollinaire's poetic styles. In describing the technique as "violence" the thesis offers a definition not only of the technique itself but also of the intentions of the poet both in the composition of the poems and in their final effects.

By analysing and attempting a critical explication of Apollinaire's poetry in chronological order, the thesis thus shows not only the development of the technique but also that this technique constitutes the underlying unity of Apollinaire's poetry which has traditionally been analysed in terms of conflicting influences and intentions. While accepting the importance of the influence of symbolism on the early poetry and even the permanence of certain aspects of this influence, the thesis shows the degree of originality present throughout the evolution of both the early poems and the later poems.

Since supposed influences of the plastic arts, and in particular the development of Cubism, have often been assumed or even shown - although never satisfactorily - to be at the origin of Apollinaire's movement away from symbolism and more traditional forms of poetic expression towards experimental and concrete forms of poetry, the thesis gives due weighting to the presence of the techniques of violence in the early poetry and consequently proves Apollinaire's poetic development to be consistent with himself.

Due emphasis given to the continuity of Apollinaire's techniques as well as to the consistency of such expressions of intent as the poet made, the thesis concludes that the originality of Apollinaire's poetry lies mainly in his exploitation of the techniques of violence.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	:	Section one : Violence in Literature,	
		A definition	p. 1
		Section two : An examination of relevant	
		statements by Apollinaire	p. 16
CHAPTER TWO	:	<u>Alcools</u>	
		Section one : Introduction	p. 52
		Section two : La Chanson du Mal-Aimé	p. 62
		Section three : Picasso and Max Jacob	p. 70
		Section four: 1907-1908	p. 82
		Section five: Other Poems	p. 155
		Section six : "Zone"	p. 201
CHAPTER THREE	:	<u>Calligrammes</u>	
		Section one : Introduction - "Liens"	p. 222
		Section two : Ondes (A) Les Fenêtres et	
		Lundi Rue Christine	p. 234
		Section three : Ondes (B)	p. 249
		Section four : Ondes (C)	p. 278
		Section five : Etendards (A)	p. 289
		Section six : Etendards (B)	p. 303
		Section seven : The War Poems	p. 312
		Section eight : Case d'Armons and Lueurs	
		des Tirs	p. 340
		Section nine : Obus Couleur de Lune	p. 361
		Section ten : La Tête Etoilée	p. 375
		Section eleven: Appendix -The Calligrammes	p. 459

CHAPTER FOUR : Conclusions

p. 462

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

p. 477

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes to the text :

O.P. = Oeuvres Poétiques

O.C. = Oeuvres Complètes

Adéma = "Guillaume Apollinaire : Le Mal-Aimé"

Adéma (68) = "Guillaume Apollinaire"

Déc. = "Le Dossier d'Alcools" by Michel Décaudin

Durry = "Guillaume Apollinaire Alcools" by Marie-Jeanne Durry

R.L.M. = Revue des Lettres Modernes

Details concerning the place and year of publication of all these works are to be found in the bibliography.

CHAPTER ONE : SECTION ONE

VIOLENCE IN LITERATURE : A DEFINITION

Most criticism of the poetry of Apollinaire has tended to show the diversity of his work - moving from its néo-symbolist beginnings via the Rhenish picturesque to what some have - unwisely - called the later 'cubist' poetry and the calligrammes. For a poet who had Mallarmé, Verlaine and Baudelaire to look back on and who was in turn looked back upon by the surrealists and other innovators of the inter-war period this seems a correct approach - especially from the point of view of the evolution of French poetry over the first decades of the century.

The division between early tendencies gradually sloughed off and later styles slowly evolved has, of course, never been put forward as a clear cut one - indeed the continuity of composition of the last poems of 'Alcools' and the first of 'Calligrammes' has never been in any doubt - but it has equally always been clear that while 'Alcools' was indispensable to any proper consideration of the last throes of symbolism in French poetry, 'Calligrammes' always belonged to the chapter entitled 'New Directions'. No-one could deny that this division exists - even if one of those who has lucidly analysed the differing natures of the two volumes - S.I. Lockerie - has also pointed out the importance of the conception of the nature of poetry and the lasting effects of this, which Apollinaire acquired from symbolist thinking.

"...quand il s'agit pour lui de faire oeuvre durable, de nous laisser un de ses poèmes vraiment marquants, on le voit alors retrouver d'instinct la même conception de la poésie, s'engager dans la même avenue, et tourner autour aussi de la même forme

poétique, qu'il associait sans doute avec tant de grandes entreprises symbolistes admirées à l'époque de ses premières lectures".(1)

The reasons put forward for this development of Apollinaire's poetry have been principally that while it was natural for a young poet to adopt the dominant style of his time, all the major works associated with this having been produced (excepting of course ^{those of} P. Valéry) it was just as imperative for a poet of talent to evolve something new.(2) There also appears to be a consensus of critical opinion that the impact of Picasso and cubism, probably also of Max Jacob and his restless searchings, not to mention the earlier acquaintance with Jarry, were vital factors in the direction which Apollinaire's poetry took. Once again, to deny this would be foolish - the evidence is abundant, and not least among the testimonies Apollinaire's own, frequently and abundantly given.

Other critics such as J. Burgos have shown the permanence and the importance of early themes and intentions - without contradicting basically the evolution we briefly describe. But, except for passing references, it has not properly been demonstrated that there is an important continuity of conception and intention (concerning poetry) in Apollinaire's work and that this has a crucial impact on his techniques and styles - nor, furthermore, has

(1) R.L.M. 1963, série Apollinaire no. 2 "Alcools et le symbolisme".

(2) This assessment is curiously at variance with the popular judgement - if one may so describe any opinion that has received the endorsement of the President of the Republic - that Apollinaire is the last of the traditional lyricists who also wrote some rather wildly experimental poems of no lasting value.

it really been demonstrated from the body of his poetry that, whatever the undeniably important influences of others, the continuous dynamic and nature of the poetry springs from Apollinaire himself and from what he saw in the work of others (not usually what they themselves saw), from his own conception of the nature of the world and the modes of man's experience of it. It is the purpose of this thesis to develop just such a study.

This study is, then, a critical appreciation and explication of the poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire, with particular emphasis on one aspect which seems to us to be of the highest importance as well as running through the poems from the first to the last, although, naturally enough, changing and developing as it does so. That aspect we have called violence, and it is now time to define our terms.

To begin negatively let us say that by violence we do not mean - except possibly incidentally - anything to do with physical violence, whether in description or as a source of moral or other reflections.

Few who are acquainted with the poetry of Apollinaire would object if the term 'poetry of surprise' were offered as a description of it; but in our opinion it is too weak and inadequate a term and we have therefore preferred to speak of violence. The controversial psychologist R.D. Laing has described the first kiss given by a mother to her new-born child as an act of violence (the first committed against the human being), and without in any way deriving our theories from Laing's ideas of self and relation to others, the apparent paradox of his remark is a useful starting point for a definition of our terms.

Clearly a newly born baby has no control over the outside world and therefore in all its experiences its role is a passive

one. Poetry which acts upon the reader in the same way seems to us to merit the description violent.

It may seem as if this allows the term to be applied to any poem, any work, indeed any line of writing, or signs or symbols - for if one accepts the necessary fact of eyes and brain and experience of the world (the 'model of the world' one carries within) in the translation of these signs, then it must be admitted that the reader does not control the sequence of these signs and therefore passively receives them. Let us clarify this by reference to a few lines of poetry, say, for sake of an example, the beginning of Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' :

"Let us go then you and I

When the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherized upon a table"

The reader's eyes, brain and knowledge (i.e. experience of the world) are necessary to an understanding of these lines. That is to say the poem is read after it is written. Therefore reading is an active thing - but it is not the reader who chooses the words. Therefore if the reader actually supplies the 'you' and 'I' he does so within the limits of these words - wide enough limits - but when we come to the 'patient etherized upon the table' these limits are clearly reduced, particularly as this is a description of evening. Therefore the act of reading is a passive thing also since the limits of it are determined by the text - its order, its juxtapositions especially.

There is no need to take Eliot's lines any further - especially since one of our key ideas has already appeared : that of juxtaposition. Obviously, the more unexpected, the more unusual the sequence of signs, the more passive the role of the reader ; i.e.

the more restricted are the boundaries of his interpretation. Equally obviously there comes a point beyond which the reader may actively assert himself by simply rejecting the sequence of signs e.g. to read the words 'floor' 'horse' 'telephone' in sequence is not to have any experience which is relevant to the domain of literary criticism, but to read Eliot's lines is.

From this we may evoke one more aspect of the experience which we describe as a kind of violence and that is that it must be meaningful - in however small or strange a way. Just as - to return momentarily to Laing - the kiss is to the child. This is not to say that the words we read must be assimilated by us to our experience of the world - on the contrary they must be something new (again like the kiss) or to take an example from a province much more immediate to our subject, Lautréamont's umbrella and sewing machine upon the operating table.(I) Things which are new, unexpected, therefore surprising, in themselves clearly have this property but so also do transitions from one thing to another : juxtapositions - as we have said - of ideas, pictures etc. not usually juxtaposed.

We have already said, in our initial introduction, that the idea informs the technique and therefore clearly the stranger the manner in which the juxtaposition is brought about the more relevant it is to speak of violence. For example, if instead of comparing the evening to an etherized patient (simile or metaphor)

(I) "Il est beau (....) comme la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection d'une machine à coudre et d'un parapluie!" Le Comte de Lautréamont : "Les Chants de Maldoror" Ed. G.L.M., Paris, 1938, pp 256-257

one simply presents to the reader the two poles, as it were, one is doubly justified in speaking of violence since not only the reader's sensibility but also the language is assaulted.

Our argument has so far been almost entirely abstract and it would greatly improve the exposition if we now became more specific and referred directly to the work of Apollinaire. As we said at the very beginning of our argument, the term "surprise" is perfectly acceptable to those who know Apollinaire's poetry, but now we must justify the term "violence". Let us consider the following statement of the historical perspective which comes from M. Décaudin's book on "Alcools"(I) :

"Pendant le XIXème siècle et surtout depuis Baudelaire, la poésie s'était sans doute affranchie de la tradition de la comparaison homérique, de l'image ou de la métaphore filées, fondées sur des identités ou des rapprochements explicables. Elle avait pu devenir obscure, irrationnelle, rechercher des correspondances qui entr'ouvrent cette forêt de symboles qu'est le monde, n'avoir pour seule loi que la musique intérieure, la subjectivité de l'artiste. Mais, si l'on excepte quelques audaces de Rimbaud, certains dévergondages cosmologiques de Laforgue et l'oeuvre unique de Jarry, l'unité de ton était sauvegardée et présidait à l'organisation des images : des "Fleurs du Mal" au symbolisme de Vielé-Griffin, Stuart Merrill ou Verhaeren cette fidélité à une règle indiscutée du goût est constante. Chez Apollinaire, non seulement les images semblent souvent avoir acquis une autonomie telle que rien, pas même le lien le plus ténu, ne semble les rapprocher, mais elles s'assemblent dans une liberté qui paraît

(I) "Le Dossier d'Alcools" p. 57

ne connaître aucun frein et se plaire parfois dans les pires disparates."

Clearly a large part of what we have given as our definition of violence so far is included in M. Décaudin's sketch of the progress of poetry from Baudelaire to Apollinaire. Moreover, Apollinaire's friends readily apply the term "surprise" to his poetry and to his legacy to others :

"Toute la poésie de la période post-apollinarienne a été, et elle reste, une poésie de la surprise. C'est pourquoi Apollinaire peut être considéré à juste titre comme le précurseur des poètes actuels."(1)

This particular instance does not lead us beyond surprise to violence, but the following quotation from Philippe Soupault, one of the young poets, who came to look on Apollinaire, towards the end of his life, as a master, does show that "surprise" is not as simple a word as it appears in Apollinaire's case - "Apollinaire avait le sens de ce qui était neuf. Mais maté par la peur il ne se déclarait jamais révolutionnaire et appelait surprise le scandale. Il aimait pourtant la violence, ce poing en pleine figure, mais il préférait jouer au plus malin. Toute une génération, celle qui précéda la guerre, dut son audace, à cet homme peureux mais fier, qui les poussait dans le dos."

And further on, another statement which is most interesting to us :

"Il savait que cette violence qui est comme un miracle pouvait seule détruire. Mais il voulait détruire pour recréer."(2)

The former of these two statements associates the new with the scandalous or the violent. Looking in fairly general terms at

(1) André Billy, "Guillaume Apollinaire", Paris, S.D., p. 38

(2) "Guillaume Apollinaire ou ^{les}reflets de l'incendie", p. 37-38

Apollinaire's life, one may illustrate this statement by referring to his support of the Cubists, an episode in which, clearly, Apollinaire's sense of what was valuable in the new led him into scandalous conflict with the accepted opinion of his day ; but this has no direct reference to his poetry.

However, if we apply the statement to Apollinaire's poetry, and there is no doubt at all that Soupault was referring to both Apollinaire's career and his writing, then this alliance of what is new with what is shocking and violent is most interesting to us. A new representation of something, as the photograph is a new point of view on the situation discussed earlier, may be achieved in a painting and may be achieved in a poetic image, and the newness alone may be enough for us to say that this representation is violent. As an example of the paintings, one might consider, say, almost any cubist still life ; as an example of the poetic image, one might consider the famous lines from "Zone" :

"C'est le Christ qui monte au ciel mieux que les aviateurs
Il détient le record du monde pour la hauteur"(I)

These lines are a new representation of the ascension of Christ and they serve our purpose admirably, for it is essentially the newness of them that is violent. The first thing that strikes the reader on seeing these lines is that they are intended to shock through their blasphemousness, yet one is forced to ask if the image of Christ as an airman is any more blasphemous than the image of Christ who can fly like a bird (even if He is not pictured with wings like the angels) which is the traditional image of Christian art. Of course these lines are not simply a representation

(I) "Zone" O.P., p. 40

of the ascension of Christ, they are much more than that, but this will be seen when we come to analyse this poem in the next chapter.

What Soupault says about Apollinaire never referring to violence is true, and anyone who questions his assertion that Apollinaire really was afraid to say all that he meant when he used the term surprise should refer to Marcel Adéma's biography, especially the chapters concerning Apollinaire's activities after his trepanation - the period in which the document "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes" was composed. Apollinaire in all probability coated his pill of violence with the sugar of such references as he made to the need for common sense and order in his speech - he was afraid that his past as a leading figure in the international avant-garde would count against him in the hyper-patriotic atmosphere of a country at war ; and he could, in theory, have been sent back to join his regiment even if not on active service.

The example of a violent poetic image which we have given above has served to illustrate the importance of the new in our definition of violence in literature ; the poet who shows us something new, or a new aspect of something known, is altering our concept of the world, by definition, and in many cases he may be said to be doing violence to it ; the example quoted being a case in point. Another of the important aspects of what we call violence in poetry is the way in which the poet may set up his own, or the poem's own, universe with its own laws ; and to this aspect the second of the quotations from Soupault is appropriate. The author of a fairy story may be said to create his own universe, in which the impossible in everyday life becomes the commonplace, but this world is created not by destruction, not by violence, but simply

by allusion to a set of conventions concerning the world of supernatural or mythical creatures, which is a generally accepted alternative to another set of conventions which we use as a frame of reference for our normal everyday perceptions of reality. (Broadly speaking any story beginning "Once upon a time" may relate events of any nature without being unfavourably compared to reality - the opening phrase is a signal that one set of conventions is being abandoned.) On the other hand, Apollinaire has recourse to what we would call imagery of violence, in order to destroy the accepted world, the world of reality, and to replace it by the world of the poem. An example of this would be the beginning of "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" :

"Le chapeau à la main il entra du pied droit
 Chez un tailleur très chic et fournisseur du roi
 Ce commerçant venait de couper quelques têtes
 De mannequins vêtus comme il faut qu'on se vête" (I)

The unreal, or possibly "surreal", atmosphere of this poem is not created by a beginning such as "Once upon a time..." but by the absurd attention to detail in the first line and the unreality of the third and fourth - one might almost say anti-reality, for at the back of one's mind as one reads these lines is the "real situation", which one might describe as follows :- A man, holding his hat in his hand, goes into a very fashionable tailor's shop, which has a window display (or interior display) of clothes on headless dummies. But Apollinaire's lines are not a way of referring to this "reality" ; they are calculated to destroy it and to replace it by an image of that situation, in such a way that the image is

much more important than the reality, of which we may see it as an expression. Thus we might say that the image is surreal, since it is a reality of its own, which is more important to the reader of the poem than the reality described above. In this way Apollinaire establishes an atmosphere, a world, and from this point he can go on in the third stanza to set out the real subject of the poem :

"Mon bateau partira demain pour l'Amérique

Et je ne reviendrai jamais"

The two aspects of violence which we have so far illustrated bring us to a very important point in our definition, for while the second example which we have quoted can be seen as taking its "raison d'être" from the need to create the atmosphere of the poem - i.e. the violence in this case is functional, has a definite purpose ; the first example, the lines from "Zone" do not come from the beginning of the poem, are not required to create the atmosphere of the poem (not even for the religious theme of the poem, as this has already been done) and therefore they may be said to be a use of violence for the sake of violence. The poet's object is to shock and to surprise his reader - not to make us look anew at the Ascension - and this leads us to consider surprise as a value in itself and not just as a concomitant of what is new (this being the way in which we approached this particular example). It is surely no less desirable an aim on an author's part to want to surprise his readers than it is to want to please them, and this is certainly the experience which one has on reading many of Apollinaire's short stories. André Fonteyne in his admirable study(I)

(I) "Apollinaire Prosateur" p. 78

of Apollinaire as a prose writer has said :

"Si ... on peut parler de surprise à la lecture de contes tels que "Le Sacrilège" ou "L'Hérésiarque" est-ce affaire d'expression? Ou n'est-ce pas plutôt l'effet de l'originalité des sujets, qui n'échappent à l'extravagance que de justesse, grâce au clin d'oeil narquois d'un auteur qui n'est pas dupe."

- and while we are not here concerned with the prose works of Apollinaire, one may surely see them as a parallel in some respects to his poetry. One finds, then, a certain strand of surprise for the sake of surprise in Apollinaire's poetry which corresponds not only to Soupault's description - "Il aimait pourtant la violence, ce poing en pleine figure..." - but also to the description of Apollinaire's nature which has been given by Marcel Adéma, and which is confirmed by all his friends.

However, in the majority of cases the distinction between surprise as a value in itself and as a mere concomitant of the new does not arise, as for Apollinaire, the role of the poet was to seize upon anything that changed the aspect of reality, such as a scientific wonder like the aeroplane, or to change for himself, like a magician, the aspect of reality ; this can be clearly seen from the next section, in which Apollinaire's ideas and theories are discussed.

Considering violence to have a definite function, from the author's point of view, now leads us to see it as a means of preserving the purity of the poem ; of enabling the author to make the reader experience more closely what he wishes him to, instead of allowing the reader to assimilate the poem to his own experience, to understand and to interpret it in terms of that experience, and so, perhaps, to miss the essence of what the poet desires to

communicate. Expressed otherwise, one might say that violence is a means of circumventing the necessity of suspension of disbelief.

An area in which it is easy to see the gist of the above statement is specifically the area of the language of the poem. More attention is likely to be drawn to the form of the poem if it is written in free verse than if it is written in regular metres ; but more important than the violation of conventional verse forms is the violation of conventional use of language or of poetic use of language. While the departure from a certain structure of line or of verse form will in time come to be accepted, even to be the norm, what one individual poet does to the normal structure and use of the language is very unlikely to become common usage and it will consequently retain its power to shock for as long as it remains comprehensible to those who speak and read that language. We are already sufficiently far away from the period when "vers libre" was new to find nothing surprising in its use, to say nothing of the Romantic version of the classical alexandrine, whereas the elliptical syntax of, say, a Nerval retains all its power and strangeness.

Thus when Apollinaire expresses the final image of "Zone" in the form -

"Soleil cou coupé"

- the violation which normal usage and form of expression has undergone retains all its power long after one has ceased to find anything remarkable in the fact that the line is of no acknowledged regular form nor does it rhyme with anything. As far as suspension of disbelief is concerned, it is a concept totally irrelevant to the reader's experience of the above image ; one cannot avoid the association of the sun and the headless neck ; the simple juxta-

position of the most basic linguistic element used to designate both has by-passed our normal assimilation of the meaning that words contain. But in the case of what is virtually the same image, only expressed in a more conventional fashion, we accept the image as a conceit :

"Plus tard une tête coupée
 Au bord d'un marécage
 O pâleur de mon ennemi
 C'était une tête d'argent
 Et dans le marais
 C'était la lune qui luisait" (I)

Granted, the delaying of the revelation that the head is in fact the moon does retain an element of surprise which makes the image more effective than it would have been if the comparison had been explicit from the beginning, but the effect pales into insignificance beside the image from "Zone". In this case we accept the image or not as we please, in the other we have no choice, it is forced upon us.

One might therefore speak of a double violence in the case of the image from "Zone" as the normal use of language has been violated and also the reader's mind has been violated by the power of the image. But, of course, the two are inseparable.

That Apollinaire was especially aware of the need for the poem to evade an easy categorisation by the reader's mind might also be deduced from the fact that he experimented with calligrammes, thereby attempting to give to his poetry the same order or quality of being as the paintings of his friends. It was in fact his

(I) "Les Soupirs du Servant de Dakar" O.P., p. 235

intention to publish the actual calligrammes themselves, which he at that time called "Idéogrammes", in a separate volume entitled "Et moi aussi Je suis peintre".

Our definition of violence in poetry is then, with respect to the work of Apollinaire, that it is a deliberate attempt upon the writer's part to endow the form of his language, or the content of his imagery, or the structure of his poem, or any combination of these three things, with such a force that they impose themselves upon the reader's mind with or without his consent. Since the word deliberate has a considerable importance in this definition, our next requirement will be to discern where, if at all, Apollinaire set out an awareness of the ideas discussed above.

CHAPTER ONE : SECTION TWO

AN EXAMINATION OF RELEVANT STATEMENTS BY APOLLINAIRE.

It will be our aim in this section to try to define Apollinaire's awareness of the concept of violence in literature, as we have defined it in section one. In order to do this we shall conduct our examination in a reverse chronological order, beginning with the writings of the period from 1916 to 1918. Our reasons for doing this are firstly that this period is the most fertile in statements about poetry, and secondly that we shall show that these statements coincide to a great degree with the definition of the concept of violence which we have given. We shall then return to the earliest statements made by Apollinaire and proceed from that point to examine any essential differences in his first ideas concerning poetry, tracing the evolution, if any, of those ideas up to the position which the poet takes up in the last years of his life. Once we have shown what was Apollinaire's attitude to violence as a literary device, the way will be open for us to proceed to an examination of the poetry itself.

The texts, then, which will concern us initially are :-

- (1) - the speech which was published shortly after Apollinaire's death in the form of a manifesto - "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes";
- (2) - the prologue to the play "Les Mamelles de Tirésias";
- (3) - those poems in the section of "Calligrammes" entitled "La Tête étoilée" which can be considered as an ars poetica ; and
- (4) - the poem "Les Collines" which is to be found in the section "Ondes" of "Calligrammes", a section which contains poems composed before the outbreak of the war. We include this last poem with the others because it seems to us that the hypothesis advanced by Mr

Scott Bates (1) according to which the poem belongs to the period 1916-1917 is highly probable, and that further proof of this should result from the ensuing analysis as well as from the analysis of the poem in section ten of chapter three.

In all of the works which we have named above, Apollinaire calls for a new poetry, completely different from the old, but nonetheless a poetry which will be a continuation of the traditions of French poetry. Apollinaire considered that the only way in which a tradition could truly be continued was for it to be renewed, for in his view, the copying of old forms of art was not only pointless, it was totally irrelevant to the modern artist. The following quotations concerning the painting of André Derain will show how clearly Apollinaire formulated this view:

"Dans les ouvrages d'André Derain que l'on expose aujourd'hui on reconnaîtra donc un tempérament audacieux et discipliné. Et toute une partie récente de son oeuvre garde la trace toujours émouvante des efforts qu'il a fallu pour concilier ces deux tendances."

"... et les audaces des peintres français durant tout le XIXème siècle sont avant tout des efforts pour retrouver la tradition authentique de l'art." (2)

Clearly a large part of the artist's role was, in the eyes of Apollinaire, to dare to take risks, and so, paradoxically, the way in which tradition was to be continued was by forgetting many of the things which were held to be an inalienable part of

(1) "Les Collines - Dernier testament d'Apollinaire", R.L.M. 1962, série Apollinaire no. 1

(2) Chroniques d'Art, p. 423 & p. 422

traditional art and poetry, for one continues the spirit and not the form of art. Thus Apollinaire could cry :

"Et tant d'univers s'oublent

Quels sont les grands oublieurs

Qui donc saura nous faire oublier telle ou telle partie du
/monde

Où est le Christophe Colomb à qui l'on devra l'oubli d'un
/continent" (1)

What must be left behind, what must be forgotten is what is old. The poet must always look for what is new, because the truth is always new and the poet through his experiments will reveal it. Apollinaire proclaims himself a poetic Aladdin offering new lamps for old :

"Le poète, par la nature même de ces explorations, est isolé dans le monde nouveau où il entre le premier, et la seule consolation qui lui reste c'est que les hommes, finalement, ne vivant que de vérités, malgré les mensonges dont ils les matelassent, il se trouve que le poète seul nourrit la vie où l'humanité trouve cette vérité." (2)

We find that Apollinaire is not so much concerned with the role of the artist as a moralist, but rather as a seeker after truth because truth, to him, is the essential aspect of reality. There are here two basic strands of Apollinaire's thought which are woven together - the artist, the poet, is the creator of what is real, although not in any sense of formal imitation of nature ; and also all that is new is an essential part of what is real

(1) "Toujours" O.P., p. 237

(2) "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes" O.C., t. 3, p. 908

because it is something which has not been revealed to us before. Therefore the role of the poet is to look for the truth of new things, of new experience, and to convey this to the reader. This is a God-like conception of the role of the poet as creator, and we find Apollinaire at pains to point out the importance of the creative role :

"C'est que poésie et création ne sont qu'une même chose ; on ne doit appeler poète que celui qui invente, celui qui crée, dans la mesure où l'homme peut créer. Le poète est celui qui découvre de nouvelles joies, fussent-elles pénibles à supporter. On peut être poète dans tous les domaines : il suffit que l'on soit aventureux et que l'on aille à la découverte." (1)

Such is the creative power of the poet that the images he creates have a prophetic force, for the creatures of the poet's imagination are, like Icarus' wings, the scientific realities of tomorrow. The poet is like a mountain, able to overlook the plain of the future (hence the title "Les Collines") and predict what is to come :

"Sache que je parle aujourd'hui

Pour annoncer au monde entier

Qu'enfin est né l'art de prédire" (2)

But the poet's ability to do this is conditional upon his ability to be a genuine creator, and the key to this lies in breaking with the old, in order to reveal to the reader the new. This revelation of the new always comes as a surprise or shock to the reader and of this Apollinaire was fully aware, for, speaking of "l'esprit

(1) Ibid. p. 907

(2) "Les Collines" O.P.p. 171

nouveau", he says :

"Nous l'avons établi sur les solides bases du bon sens et de l'expérience, qui nous ont amenés à n'accepter les choses et les sentiments que selon la vérité, et c'est selon la vérité que nous les admettons, ne cherchant point à rendre sublime ce qui est ridicule ou réciproquement. Et de ces vérités il résulte le plus souvent la surprise, puisqu'elles vont contre l'opinion communément admise. Beaucoup de ces vérités n'avaient pas été examinées. Il suffit de les dévoiler pour causer une surprise." (1)

Clearly, Apollinaire is here describing one of the basic aspects of violence in literature as we have defined it. But not only does he recognize the effect of surprise the new will have upon the reader, he goes further, advocating the use of surprise as the principal means available to the poet, and indicates that this is what distinguishes the new from the old in literature :

"Mais le nouveau existe bien, sans être un progrès. Il est tout dans la surprise. L'esprit nouveau est également dans la surprise. C'est ce qu'il y a en lui de plus vivant, de plus neuf. La surprise est le grand ressort nouveau. C'est par la surprise, par la place importante qu'il fait à la surprise, que l'esprit nouveau se distingue de tous les mouvements littéraires qui l'ont précédé." (2)

The explorer-poet will, of course, be free, indeed will be forced, to create a new language, itself an instrument of shock, to be the vehicle for the new poetry :

"A l'institut des jeunes aveugles on a demandé

N'avez-vous point de jeune aveugle ailé

(1) "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes" p. 906

(2) Ibid. p. 906

O bouches l'homme est à la recherche d'un nouveau langage
 Auquel le grammairien d'aucune langue n'aura rien à dire
 Et ces vieilles langues sont tellement près de mourir
 Que c'est vraiment par habitude et manque d'audace
 Qu'on les fait encore servir à la poésie

+ + +

Mais entêtons-nous à parler

Remuons la langue

Lançons des postillons

On veut de nouveaux sons de nouveaux sons de nouveaux sons

On veut des consonnes sans voyelles

Des consonnes qui pètent sourdement

Imitez le son de la toupie

Laissez pétiller un son nasal et continu

Faites claquer votre langue

Servez-vous du bruit sourd de celui qui mange sans civilité

Le raclement aspiré du crachement ferait aussi une belle

/consonne

Les divers pets labiaux rendraient aussi vos discours

/claironnants

Habituez-vous à roter à volonté" (I)

It is surely unnecessary to point out how surprising this passage would be to the literary audience of 1918, or indeed to a present day one, but what is especially worthy of note is that Apollinaire is perfectly willing to include in his poetry the vulgar, the ridiculous, even the disgusting, and not simply because they were

(I) "La Victoire" O.P., p. 309

shocking, but because he believed there was a place for them in the art of the twentieth century. "L'esprit nouveau" was for Apollinaire complex enough to embrace all aspects of modern man, especially that side of him that had hitherto been excluded from all art ; in this he openly acknowledges his predecessor Alfred Jarry :

"Nous avons vu depuis Alfred Jarry le rire s'élever des basses régions où il se tordait et fournir au poète un lyrisme tout neuf. Où est le temps où le mouchoir de Desdemone paraissait d'un ridicule inadmissible? Aujourd'hui, le ridicule même est poursuivi, on cherche à s'en emparer et il a sa place dans la poésie, parce qu'il fait partie de la vie au même titre que l'héroïsme et tout ce qui nourrissait jadis l'enthousiasme des poètes." (1)

Clearly, Apollinaire is defining his position as one in which the ideas of good and bad taste are only relevant when they apply to the distinctions that his readers would make, so that certain images or words "in bad taste" would be shocking to them. The whole complex nature of man must be open to the artist to explore and if this is so then he will in consequence shock, even wound, by what he reveals ; but this only serves to prove the validity of what he is saying. To reveal the unknown, to give substance to the intangible, these are the tasks of the poet and his creative means is, above all else, violence.

There is a distinction which Apollinaire himself does not make, and therefore presumably did not consider important, but which it is prudent to draw attention to here ; this is the

(1) "L'Esprit Nouveau" p. 905

distinction between surprise as a value, an end in itself, and surprise as a by-product, as it were, of something that is new or unknown. If we consider the sequence which we quoted above, concerning the renewal of language, it is clear that Apollinaire saw both aspects of shock images as necessarily woven together, for language is a vehicle for the communication of the poet's ideas, but it is a vehicle which itself shapes and forms part of those ideas. Thus, in advocating the use of various noises, which are considered vulgar, as sounds in a new language, Apollinaire is seeking an identity of form and content. In other words, for Apollinaire, saying something new could just as well mean saying in a new way something which had been said before, as it could mean talking about something which was new in itself.

Thus, while part of the new poetry is summed up in these lines from "La Jolie Rousse" -

"Nous voulons vous donner de vastes et d'étranges domaines
Où le mystère en fleurs s'offre à qui veut le cueillir
Il y a des feux nouveaux des couleurs jamais vues
Mille phantasmes impondérables
Auxquels il faut donner de la réalité" (1)

- there is the other part which is more obviously brought out in the following quotation from "Les Collines" :

"Et je pèle pour mes amis
L'orange dont la saveur est
Un merveilleux feu d'artifice" (2)

The surprise is a double value and is achieved by a double effect,

(1) "La Jolie Rousse" O.P., p. 313

(2) "Les Collines" O.P., p. 176

for we react to the manner in which the poet describes the flavour of an orange as a firework, but the orange itself is a symbol of surprise, or rather of the imagery of surprise. This is seen not only from the fact that the above quotation is preceded by a sequence which is intended to be the result of the imagination transfiguring reality, which is then commented upon in the lines above (1), it may also be seen from the way in which Apollinaire speaks of the orange in the following quotations :

"La fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange

Le beau fruit de la lumière" (2)

"Si l'on devait comparer l'oeuvre d'Henri Matisse à quelque chose, il faudrait choisir l'orange. Comme elle l'oeuvre d'Henri Matisse est un fruit de lumière éclatante." (3)

In both these images Apollinaire is revealing the impression he had of the power of an orange to stand as a visual symbol of something striking, and when we are aware of this it is easier for us to see the full value of the orange in the image from "Les Collines".

The distinction, then, which some would make between surprise as a value and surprise as a mere concomitant is not on the whole relevant to Apollinaire's work. But there are certain aspects of the use of shock tactics, which exploit surprise in a rather different way and of this usage it is right to say that the poet was using surprise as a weapon, for we find him employing certain lines, certain images in such a way as to increase the autonomy of his

(1) cf. the analysis of these lines in Ch. 3 section 10 pp. 432-436

(2) "Les Fenêtres" O.P., p. 169

(3) "Chroniques d'Art" p. 430 - this might also be seen as evidence for dating the image from "Les Collines" as 1916-1918.

poem, to free it from a possible interpretation by the reader. This particular aspect of the techniques of violence never found expression in Apollinaire's theoretical writing and so the best place to discuss it is perhaps not here but in the chapters concerning the imagery. Suffice it to say for the moment that Apollinaire's love of strange and exotic words is perhaps an example of this. His early notebooks reveal various notes concerning certain unusual words, some of which appear later in poems, where their effect on the reader can only be to assert the independence of what he is reading from his own experience, which might otherwise become a restrictive factor in his interpretation of the poem.(1)

Finally, we turn to an often quoted passage from the prologue to "Les Mamelles de Tirésias", which we wish to use in order to illustrate another aspect of Apollinaire's awareness of what we have called violence in literature, and we wish to examine this passage, as is not often done, in its context as part of a prologue to a play :

"Le grand déploiement de notre art moderne

Mariant souvent sans lien apparent comme dans la vie

Les sons les gestes les couleurs les cris les bruits" (2)

This passage, as we have said, has often been quoted as a kind of apology for the discontinuous poetry which Apollinaire wrote, and clearly it does refer to the kind of poetic experience which he sought in poems such as "Lundi Rue Christine"(3), but it is not

(1) "Le Brasier" offers a good example of such lines: cf. Ch.2 sec.4

(2) O.P., p. 88I

(3) cf. Ch. 3 sec. 2(A)

often taken into consideration that Apollinaire is here referring to his idea of the theatre as embodied in a particular performance. This does not mean that we wish to restrict the significance of this passage, on the contrary, we wish to extend the ideas which it conveys. If we examine the lines quoted and the lines which immediately follow :

"La musique la danse l'acrobatie la poésie la peinture
Les chœurs les actions et les décors multiples

Vous trouverez ici des actions

Qui s'ajoutent au drame principal et l'ornent (our underli-

Et l'usage raisonnable des invraisemblances" /ning

- then we find that the poet, concerned with the total effect of the play as a spectacle is quite prepared to incorporate some elements for their own sake, and the effect which he hopes to derive from these elements is one of surprise - one opposed to the strictly utilitarian attitude towards what takes place on stage in relation to the plot and main action. This is an attitude which is to be found in his poetry also.

We find with certain lines of Apollinaire's poetry that they contribute to the total effect of the poem while being without apparent direct relation to either the main theme or the general structure of the imagery. In a poem such as "Zone" (which, it is true, does not belong to the period 1916-1918, but will serve as an example) we find a structure which lends itself to this kind of exploitation. The poet wandering through Paris is free to incorporate any detail of the scene before him as part of his poem without it bearing any specific relation to the themes of unrequited love and the role of religion. Thus the lines such as -

"Maintenant tu marches dans Paris tout seul parmi la foule

Des troupeaux d'autobus mugissants près de toi roulent"

- apart from being lines which situate the poet and which contribute to the humour of the poem, are also random details which contribute to the total effect of discontinuity, of fragmentation of experience.

It is quite clear that the sum of all the aspects of poetry which we have found thus formulated in Apollinaire's writings contribute to a specific awareness of what we have called the concept of violence as a literary device in some if not all of its aspects. This is not yet the place to explore the differences which may exist between Apollinaire's theories and ours, for we have yet to examine the theories in action ; this will be done in chapters two and three in which we shall be analysing the imagery in its own right. From this point we now turn to look at the beginning of Apollinaire's career as a poet - a period which, not surprisingly, does^{not} afford a great deal of theoretical writing for us to examine, but which we may nevertheless look at from a slightly different angle.

Being born in the age he was, it would have been very strange indeed if the poetry of Apollinaire did not bear the marks of symbolism. And while we are not concerned to analyse in detail here the question of whether or not Apollinaire was a symbolist poet, we are concerned to show to some extent the traces of symbolist ideas in his poetry. Apart from the fact that Apollinaire himself acknowledged a debt to the symbolist masters, in an article entitled "La Poésie Symboliste" which he published in 1909 in "La Phalange Nouvelle" (I overleaf) - which is but one indication that by that time he had to some extent moved away from his symbolist

beginnings - other critics have shown in greater detail than the space available to us permits that the influence of symbolism upon Apollinaire was very strong. In particular S.I. Lockerbie has put forward a well argued case for the permanence of this influence upon Apollinaire :

"Ce que je voudrais avancer, c'est que la jeunesse d'Apollinaire avait été tellement marquée par ses lectures des poètes symbolistes que dès le début il était acquis à une conception de la poésie qui en faisait surtout une chasse spirituelle. De là le fait que tant d'avenues poétiques lui étaient fermées ou ne le tentaient pas -poésie satirique etc (...) quand il s'agit pour lui de faire oeuvre durable, de nous laisser un de ses poèmes vraiment marquants, on le voit alors retrouver d'instinct la même conception de la poésie, s'engager dans la même avenue, et tourner autour aussi de la même forme poétique, qu'il associait sans doute avec tant de grandes entreprises symbolistes admirées à l'époque de ses premières lectures." (2)

If this is the case, and few critics would differ at least on the point of the initial influence of symbolism, then we must not expect to find the young Apollinaire formulating any statements about poetry which differ radically from the doctrines of symbolism - especially anything as radically different as the concept of/

(1) "C'est aux symbolistes que Verlaine et Mallarmé ont transmis la tradition qui un moment était devenue le Parnasse. Les symbolistes furent les premiers objets de nos enthousiasmes et tous ceux qui, depuis 1895, ont créé de la poésie doivent de la reconnaissance aux maîtres aimés du symbolisme."

(2) R.L.M. 1963, série Apollinaire 98.2 "Alcools et le symbolisme".

violence in literature. Nonetheless, we shall see in the next chapter that even in his most symbolist poems the techniques of violence have some part.

What little literary and art criticism Apollinaire did write at the beginning of the century (for our purposes this means 1900-1904) is largely marked by the eclecticism of its author's tastes, and his willingness to appreciate artistic endeavour which was totally different from his own, a characteristic which he retained throughout his life. Which is not to say that he appreciated everything equally because he had no taste of his own or that his position was one of ignorance ; on the contrary the ideas which were to shape the future development of his poetry and art criticism were already beginning to crystallise, and that largely as a result of his own reflection rather than external influences, as Breunig observes in his introduction to Apollinaire's collected art criticism :

"Il faut croire qu'en fait de peinture et de sculpture, Apollinaire était presque entièrement autodidacte. A Paris en 1901, avant son départ pour l'Allemagne, il aurait assisté aux séances du Collège d'esthétique d'art moderne, à en croire Maurice Leblond, et c'est là vraisemblablement que sous l'influence du naturisme s'est affirmé son attachement encore assez intermittent au "merveilleux moderne" qui quelque mois plus tard lui fera évoquer la tour Eiffel devant la cathédrale de Cologne."(1)

Certainly, Apollinaire did not lack confidence in the art of his time, even before he saw what that art would be :

".... notre époque verra en France et en Algérie une floraison

(1) "Chroniques d'Art" Introduction (Breunig) p. 9

d'oeuvres belles, telles que seul le dix-septième siècle harmonieux et classique sera comparable au vingtième siècle plus harmonieux et plus classique, de même que seuls les nobles efforts du seizième siècle comptent au regard des efforts admirables, des tentatives grandioses du dix-neuvième siècle."(1)

It would perhaps not be inappropriate to justify briefly at this point our use of certain quotations from Apollinaire's essays and articles on painters and their work to illustrate his attitude to his own poetry. In fact many critics, Braque among them, have pointed out that Apollinaire most commonly saw in a work of art that which interested him personally, which was not always the most important aspect of that work in the eyes of its creator. This is a point to which we shall return, but it is clear from the frequent statements which Apollinaire made concerning the role of the artist/poet that he equated their functions although he was always careful to draw a rigorous distinction between the media in which they operate. Thus the foregoing quotation may be seen as an expression of confidence in himself as much as in his contemporaries, and also, significantly as an expression of confidence in the new, in the possibilities which the artistic and literary schisms of the previous century had opened up for the present one.

This first and important aspect of his later theories is the only one which we find formulated at this stage of his career, although his poems themselves show evidence of a more complete kind that he was already working towards the effect of his later style.(2) We should not, however, consider this surprising, as

(1) "La Grande France" O.C., t.4, p. 773

(2) cf. Ch.2 secs. I & 2

there exists almost no formulation of any poetic doctrine whatsoever among Apollinaire's writings of this period ; but then, how many young poets are confident or mature enough to begin their careers with a manifesto ; these tend to be more the result of schools or groups than of individuals working on their own, which was Apollinaire's case. He had not yet established more than very tentative contacts with the literary milieux and in any case it was not really in his nature to be part of a school. This is something that can be seen quite clearly from "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes", which is not the manifesto of any group, but rather, when Apollinaire is generalising and not speaking about his own work, is an attempt to define the directions of modern art and literature as Apollinaire saw them in the work of his contemporaries - as well as his own poetry, of course. It should be remembered that this document was written at a time when Apollinaire was being acclaimed by a younger generation of poets and if this has led certain critics to write that he appeared at that time as the leader of a group, then this is only true from an external point of view - that is from the literary critic's retrospective viewpoint or, perhaps, from the point of view of those young poets themselves, but not from Apollinaire's point of view. (1)overleaf)

However, to return to the period with which we are immediately concerned, this willingness to accept the "beau nouveau" is already present in the poetry which Apollinaire was writing in Germany :

"Dôme merveilleux entre les merveilles du monde

La tour Eiffel et le Palais de Rosemonde"(2)overleaf)

- and that, as we shall see, is an aspect of considerable importance in the aesthetic ideas which he was later to develop. However,

of the variety of influences affecting his poetry, there was perhaps one, and this in no way a theoretical influence, which more than the others shaped his style and probably held up the development of his ideas. That influence was the overwhelming need he felt for as direct an expression as possible of his feelings arising from his unhappy affair with Annie Playden. If one looks at the poems which Apollinaire wrote from the time of their encounter to the moment when other influences began to exercise

- (I) cf. Aragon : "Pour avoir dérobé le feu au ciel, l'arc-en-ciel, l'Hérésiarque vient de mourir. Juste châtement d'une vie qui se maintint toujours dans les royaumes défendus de la magie.(...)

La légende se créait autour de lui, nimbe doré qu'on voit aux césars de Byzance. D'elle seule je me souviendrai, soucieux biographe de l'unique beauté qu'il semait sur ses pas, pour que périsse à tout jamais ce cadavre d'homme privé, et que subsiste au creux du chêne l'enchanteur Apollinaire dont la voix sans bouche exaltera les adolescents des générations futures à la quête ardente et passionnée des essences inconnues qui mieux que les alcools du passé enivreront demain." "Sic" jan.-fév. 1919, nos. 37-39

But on the other hand aware of Apollinaire's independence : Lucien Descaves (in the same issue) : "Il allait nulle part porté par la foule, et il ne cherchait pas à faire école, tellement il était soucieux avant tout de conserver à ses mouvements d'esprit leur aisance naturelle."

- (2) "Le Dôme de Cologne" O.P., p. 538

a stronger claim on him, that is to say between 1906 and 1907 (I), one finds the presence of Annie inescapable. Forced into writing his poetry under the direct and powerful stimulus of an emotional need, he was left with little time to develop his ideas on poetry and the role of the poet.

The result of this obsession with Annie was inevitable, though fortunately mitigated by the positive influence of Picasso and others ; Apollinaire's writing simply dried up as he found himself possessed by a single thought, on which he had already produced several fine poems. Moreover his companions had no shortage of ideas, and he must have begun to feel himself inferior

(I) cf. Déc. p. 207 : "Apollinaire considère comme une époque d'engourdissement la période pendant laquelle toute sa poésie est nourrie de la pensée d'Annie - approximativement de la fin 1901 à la fin 1906. (....) Sauf quelques exceptions, son inspiration, ironique ou sentimentale, le ramène cependant toujours au thème de la séparation et de la solitude. A partir de 1907, il se sent au contraire une âme nouvelle. Ses ambitions antérieures, ces poèmes si grandioses qu'il a dû les laisser inachevés, nous n'en trouvons pas trace dans ce que nous connaissons de son oeuvre, mais ne s'agirait-il pas du premier projet, qui semble si ambitieux, de l'Enchanteur Pourrissant, qui peut bien être dit poème?

Il n'est plus question maintenant de satisfaire à un excessif souci de perfection et à l'art poétique : la poésie est dans la vie même de l'homme, dans sa sensibilité, et dans le regard qu'il jette sur le monde. Expérience capitale, dans laquelle se découvrent les véritables valeurs poétiques."

to them. During 1906 and most of 1907 he published nothing. Clearly he was undergoing a crisis of serious proportions, and when the "Revue Littéraire de Paris et de Champagne" sent him, as a young writer of some reputation, a questionnaire including an inquiry about his own work, he replied that he did not consider that he had written anything of any significance, and this at a time when he had already written "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé", which he was not ashamed to publish about three years later when he had regained his confidence in himself. While he may have held certain ideas of what poetry should be, he never formulated them properly at this time, and tended to consider all means of poetic expression equally valid, indeed his replies to the above mentioned questionnaire are woolly and imprecise in all cases (I).

The year 1907 was for him a vigorous re-awakening and we shall attempt to show what new spirit came to him and how this found expression at this time in a period of extremely fruitful activity. In August of this year Apollinaire published the poem that was eventually to become "La Maison des Morts" under the title of "L'Obituaire", and this was the public beginning to a re-launching

(I) Consider the following : "Je suis pour un art de fantaisie, de sentiment et de pensée, aussi éloigné que possible de la nature avec laquelle il ne doit avoir rien de commun. C'est, je crois, l'art de Racine, de Baudelaire, de Rimbaud." If, in calling for an art, which has nothing to do with nature, Apollinaire seems to be already on the lines which lead to "surnaturalisme" and "surréalisme", then the qualification which he puts on this statement does not really allow us to say that he had gone far in thinking out his ideas.

of his career. "Lul de Faltenin" followed and then came the year of 1908 in which he attempted his most ambitious poems so far - "Onirocritique", "Le Pyrée" ("Le Brasier"), and "Les Fiançailles"(1). At this time Apollinaire was assisting at the birth of Cubism, he was also in close contact with the neo-symbolist group of "La Phalange" ; in addition to these intellectual stimuli, in 1907 he met Marie Laurencin and his belief in love was renewed. In this intense atmosphere someone of Apollinaire's temperament could not fail to respond in a way just as intense. The richness and the density of the poems mentioned above is brought out in the appropriate section, but here we wish to see what ideas these poems hold, what expression there is in them of the ideas which are present in the various writings discussed at the beginning of this section. Apart from the form of the poem, which is an obvious affirmation of the poet's belief in free verse, we find the lines -

"Pardonnez-moi mon ignorance

Pardonnez-moi de ne plus connaître l'ancien jeu des vers"(2)
- which, because they ask for pardon, are an indication of the poet's intention to experiment with form. He is asking for the reader's indulgence in the same way as he does much later in "La Jolie Rousse" :

"Vous dont la bouche est faite à l'image de celle de Dieu
Bouche qui est l'ordre même
Soyez indulgents quand vous nous comparez
A ceux qui furent la perfection de l'ordre
Nous qui quêtions partout l'aventure" (3)

(1) For an analysis of these poems see Ch.2 sec.4

(2) O.P., p. 132

(3) O.P., p. 313

But this (*Les Fiançailles*) is not the first time that Apollinaire wrote in free verse ; therefore why should he choose to make his plea for indulgence in this poem? Undoubtedly it is because he was experimenting with far more than just the length of line and use of rhyme. In fact "l'ancien jeu des vers" should ~~not~~ be taken to mean the old ideas of poetry in general and not just the rules of metre etc.

However, there is one difference between the quotations from "*Les Fiançailles*" and "*La Jolie Rousse*", and that is that the former is not at all definite as to what the poet is replacing the old poetry with. Admittedly "*La Jolie Rousse*" simply proclaims the role of adventure and this might well be a variety of things, but the rest of the poem is more specific, as has already been shown and as will be further discussed in a later section. "*Les Fiançailles*" does, of course, offer something in place of what the poet has discarded, but there is a much greater tentativeness about the whole poem. The line which follows the two quoted above states the poet's position as -

"Je ne sais plus rien et j'aime uniquement"

- and it is from this love that he is drawing his new poetry.

The next section of this poem begins with the lines -

"J'observe le repos du dimanche

Et je loue la paresse

Comment comment réduire

L'infiniment petite science

Que m'imposent mes sens"

- which are a clear statement of the poet's desire to achieve an expression of something more than a simple sensuous experience of the world. He praises laziness because there is no need for him to

move around. The experience which he wishes to express is the experience of the imagination and this he can do seated in his chair, as the following quotation from "Le Brasier" shows :

"Là-haut le théâtre est bâti avec le feu solide
Comme les astres dont se nourrit le vide

Et voici le spectacle

Et pour toujours je suis assis dans un fauteuil" (I)

(And since the theatre is situated entirely within the realm of the imagination the "fauteuil" might as well mean his own armchair at home as his seat in the stalls.)

Furthermore, in the section of "Les Fiançailles" following that quoted above, we find the following statement :

"A la fin les mensonges ne me font plus peur" (2)

If we now draw together these various strands which we have isolated from their context, we can see that Apollinaire's preoccupations at this moment were to find poetic forms capable of expressing the experience of the imagination (which is embodied in these two poems, as will later be shown) and to liberate the imagination from the bonds it is held in by one's purely sensuous experience of the world and by the consideration that art should be an imitation of reality. By the statement that he is not afraid to lie, and by the example which he gives -

"C'est la lune qui cuit comme un oeuf sur le plat"

- Apollinaire intends to demonstrate that he is not concerned with those ideas about art which limit it to a purely representative

(I) O.P., p. 110

(2) O.P., p. 134

function with respect to sensually perceived reality, or intellectually digested emotion. This position is identical with that expressed in the following quotations from "Le Poète Assassiné" :

"Il y avait encore dans l'atelier une chose fatale, ce grand morceau de miroir brisé, retenu au mur par des clous à crochet. C'était une insondable mer morte, verticale et au fond de laquelle une fausse vie animait ce qui n'existe pas. Ainsi, en face de l'Art, il y a son apparence (the mirror is in the studio of Croniamental's friend L'Oiseau du Bénin - generally recognised as Picasso), dont les hommes ne se défient point et qui les abaisse lorsque l'Art les avait élevés." (1)

This aspect of the poet's thought, then, would seem to be one of the central pillars of his theories, running right through from the poem which L.C. Breunig has so astutely seen as Apollinaire's "Demoiselles d'Avignon" (2) with all that that implies about its relation to what follows it, to the last period of his life. It is an aspect upon which he throws further light at this period. Consider the following quotation from an article on the poetry of Jean Royère published in "La Phalange" of January 1908 :

"Nous n'avons pas besoin de vérités ; la nature et la science en ont assez qui nous portent malheur. La poésie de Jean Royère est aussi fausse que doit l'être une nouvelle création au regard de l'ancienne. Quelle fausseté enchanteresse! Rien qui nous ressemble et tout à notre image." (3)

(1) "Le Poète Assassiné" pp. 47-48

(2) "Apollinaire's 'Les Fiançailles'" : Essays in French Literature, nov. 1966. no 3. (University of Western Australia) .

(3) O.C., t.3, p. 783

But as we have pointed out in the first section of this chapter, if one wishes to establish a poetic universe which does not depend upon the universe of our ordinary perceptions for its existence, then one has recourse to one of two methods, either one refers to another set of conventions, to a mythology, and this is what Royère does as Apollinaire is well aware -

"Et soeur nue de Narcisse, créature certaine du poète, il ne se doutait pas de votre existence antérieure. Mais, triomphe de la fausseté, de l'erreur, de l'imagination, Dieu et le poète crée à l'envi."

- his creatures are the creatures of myth and legend which he may modify, but whose existence is accepted by the reader because already established by a certain convention. The other method is the method which Apollinaire adopts, that of the lie, which by its nature is a violence, since it is contrary to what we know (the truth). Of course, one may argue that there is a whole case to be made out for the writer as liar, which has nothing to do with what we have chosen to call violence, and this is quite true. However, Apollinaire's lies quite definitely fall into the category of violence as can be seen from the line quoted as an example. By comparing the moon to a fried egg, Apollinaire is replacing the image we have of it by another which is calculated to make us laugh.(1) Just how the image functions, however, is not the subject of this section, but is examined in the appropriate part of chapter two.

This role of creator which Apollinaire thinks is that of the poet, and which we called a God-like role(2), receives just that

(1) cf. Ch.2 sec.4 pp. 131-133

(2) cf. p. 18-19

qualification in the article on Royère, and in August of the same year one finds Apollinaire developing the philosophical consequences, or some of them at least, of this consideration :

"Le poète est analogue à la divinité. Il sait que dans sa création la vérité est indéfectible. Il admire son ouvrage. Il connaît l'erreur qui anime sa créature, fausse au regard de nos visions mais qui présente aux puissances momentanées une vérité éternelle. Aussi l'organisme d'une créature poétique ne contient-il pas moins de perfection que celui d'une de celles qui tombent sous nos sens." (I)

Thus the experience which the poet offers us is just as valid as the experience of the world which is offered to us by our senses and the intellect. The poet's instrument of creation must then be the imagination, for if he is to attempt a creation in his own right, then he must not depend upon his senses - means of contact with the external world(2) - nor on his intellect which organises the information received from those senses. Thus the poet's function is to give an imaginative re-interpretation of the world and the experience of it. He establishes, in doing this, new truths for as the above quotation continues :

"Chaque jour peut-être une volonté toute puissante change l'ordre des choses, contrarie les causes et les effets et anéantit le souvenir et la vérité même de ce qui existait la veille pour

(I) O.C., t.3, p.802

(2) cf. "Liens" O.P.p.167: "J'écris seulement pour vous exalter

O sens ô sens chéris

Ennemis du souvenir

Ennemis du désir" etc.

créer une succession d'événements établissant une nouvelle vérité. Tel est l'ouvrage poétique : la fausseté d'une réalité anéantie. Et le souvenir même a disparu."

One notes the obvious influence of the neo-symbolists in the vocabulary, the Mallarméan concept of the poem as "la fausseté d'une réalité anéantie", but it is not our intention here to discuss the extent of that influence. Suffice it to say that the expression may derive much from the neo-symbolists, but as may be seen from the preceding pages of this section, the concept is Apollinaire's own. In fact, Apollinaire here seems to go beyond the desire to re-interpret the world and appears to be according to the artist the powers to remake it.

However, the important point is that Apollinaire insisted on the autonomy of the work of art from the external world ; it had to exist in its own universe. This is clearly revealed in the following quotation, which is taken from an essay on Georges Braque, written in 1908 and later re-incorporated into "Les Peintres Cubistes" in 1911 :

"Pour le peintre, pour le poète, pour les artistes (c'est ce qui les différencie des autres hommes, et surtout des savants), chaque oeuvre devient un univers nouveau avec ses lois particulières."
(1)

Also quite clear from this quotation is the fact that we are justified in extending statements concerning the role of the artist (i.e. painter) to include the role of the poet, for while Apollinaire was always careful to distinguish between the works of poet and painter, he equated their functions.

(1) "Chroniques d'Art" pp. 60-61

It would have been strange indeed if the poetry of Apollinaire, under the stimulus imparted to it by all the intellectual and artistic activity which surrounded the poet at this time, had remained under the symbolist sphere of influence also. Thus one finds in the poems of 1908 a desire to separate himself from the symbolist aesthetic, and to affirm the need for a new poetry. Clearly certain traces remain, and all critics are unanimous in discerning the lasting importance of Apollinaire's early formation. Thus one finds certain contradictions in "Les Fiançailles" and "Le Brasier", but especially the former, and these will be brought out in the analysis of the poem in chapter two, but their full significance will be remarked on in the conclusions to this study.

The most obvious point at which Apollinaire separates from the symbolist approach to poetry is in his determination, which begins to manifest itself at this time, to find the matter of his poetry in the world about him, among the objects of everyday life. It might appear that there is a fundamental contradiction between this attitude to poetry and that elaborated on the preceding pages, the poetry of lies and falsehood, but this contradiction certainly did not exist for Apollinaire. If a poem such as "Zone" can be said to go out into the streets of Paris and find part of its subject matter there, it may also be said to transform that subject matter, as is readily apparent from any analysis of the poem. (1) Apollinaire himself reconciled the apparently contradictory aspects of his approach and he readily saw the same reconciliation in the works of others, as is illustrated by his comment on "Le Défaut de l'Armure" by Albert Erlande (2) :

(1) cf. Ch.2 sec.6

(2) O.C., t.3, p. 815

"Puisqu'il est poète/^{qu'}il se serve donc toujours de ses qualités poétiques, qu'il invente plus souvent, et que la réalité ne soit pas pour lui un modèle, mais tout au plus la matière dont il a besoin pour produire comme un peintre a besoin de couleurs."

This then is Apollinaire's attitude to the role of the artist, and if it should have led him to such errors of taste as preferring the now forgotten M. Albert Erlande to Zola and Maupassant -

"Je ne parle pas de Zola ni de Maupassant.

Puisse-t-on étrangler leur souvenir dans un cul-de-sac. On en a assez de tout ce qui ne marque pas chez son auteur une imagination pleine d'inattendu. On ne sera jamais fatigué de la fiction, mais qu'est-ce que la fiction sans fantaisie?"(I)

- he clearly reveals how he was thinking about the role of the writer and its effects upon his own writing were far more felicitous.

There is one final aspect of this period which must be brought out in order to show how close to the ideas of the period 1916-1918 Apollinaire had already come in 1908, and that is his awareness of the nature and the function of the poetic image. The following quotation comes from "Les Trois Vertus Plastiques" which is ostensibly concerned with painting, but it most certainly applies to poetry and particularly to the poetry of Apollinaire himself :

"En vain les saisons frémissent, les foules se ruent unanimement vers la même mort, la science défait et refait ce qui existe, les mondes s'éloignent à jamais de notre conception, nos images mobiles se répètent et ressuscitent leur inconscience et les couleurs, les odeurs, les bruits nous étonnent puis disparaissent

(I) O.C., t.3, p. 815

de la nature." (1)

Ignoring the poetic prose in which this statement is couched, there are two aspects of it which are of particular interest to us; firstly the insistence on the mobile nature of the image and secondly the effect which these images have upon us before disappearing. It is difficult, of course, to say that by mobility of the image Apollinaire meant precisely this or that quality which we may isolate in his writing, but certainly it is a qualification which fits lines of this sort -

"Un tout petit bouquet flottant à l'aventure

Couvrit l'océan d'une immense floraison" (2)

- as indeed does the demand that the image should astonish us. In fact, what the above passage calls for is the kind of quality which Apollinaire accorded to the works of the enchanters and which he claimed to have recaptured in "Les Collines". (3)

Having now outlined the similarities which exist between the theories, more or less formulated as such, of 1916-1918 and the ideas of 1907-1908, one must go on to ask whether Apollinaire held to these ideas constantly, or whether he allowed his restless mind to lead him elsewhere, possibly under the influence of a Delaunay, or even a Picasso. To answer such a question we must look particularly at the period beginning in 1912 and ending with Apollinaire's involvement with the war. This is a period in which he wrote a great deal of art criticism as well as many poems. It is a period which saw the appearance of "Alcools" and "Les Peintres"

(1) "Chroniques d'Art" p. 56

(2) O.P., p. 106 "L'Emigrant de Landor Road"

(3) O.P., p. 172

cubistes" as well as the editions of "Les Soirées de Paris" under Apollinaire's direction. The year 1913 also saw the publication of his "manifesto" "L'Antitradition Futuriste" and one might well draw many conclusions from his acceptance of the futurists as well as his reservations concerning some of their activities, and the distinction which must be made between his writing of the period and theirs.

It is obvious that the futurists' technique of "mots en liberté" is related to many of the experiments one finds in Apollinaire's poetry, in particular the early calligrammes, as is the opinion of M. Adéma -

"... Marinetti et les futuristes avaient inauguré les 'mots en liberté'. Son (i.e. Apollinaire) premier essai dans le genre s'inspire de ces tentatives diverses. 'Lettre-Océan, (.....) est pourtant une fantaisie concertée dont la difficulté de lecture concourt à l'effet de surprise qu'il recherche par principe." (1) - but many of Apollinaire's friends, as well as later critics, were aware that the character of Apollinaire's so-called manifesto was more jocular than serious.

"Le futurisme a vécu! C'est M. Guillaume Apollinaire qui lui a porté le coup fatal en signant le manifeste qu'on va lire.... Il fallait trouver ceci : Être plus futuriste que Marinetti ; M. Guillaume Apollinaire y a réussi ... Le futurisme a vécu et cela vaut bien qu'on se réjouisse." (2)

Thus André Salmon commenting upon his friend's "manifesto".

(1) Adéma (68) p. 242

(2) "La Fin du Futurisme" in Gil Blas 3 août 1913 - quoted by M. Adéma, in Adéma (68) p. 228

And one is much tempted to agree with M. Adéma who, after quoting Salmon, goes on to conclude :

"On peut se demander si, en effet, le dessein secret d'Apollinaire n'est pas, en outrant les termes, de démontrer l'inanité du mouvement auquel il reproche d'être une imitation, en littérature comme en peinture, des artistes français modernes." And in poetry who else could the Italians imitate but Apollinaire himself? We might well see, then, the "Antitradition futuriste" as a joke at the expense of the futurists who had picked up the destructive aspects only of Apollinaire's poetry, and thought they could build a new world with them.

If in his article "Nos amis les futuristes"(1) Apollinaire ascribes the origins of the futurists' style to sources other than himself, namely -

"La nouvelle technique des mots en liberté sortie de Rimbaud, de Mallarmé, des symbolistes en général et du style télégraphique en particulier,"

- this is not to say that he did not see himself as preceding the Italians to some extent, but rather that he acknowledged, as they did not, predecessors in this line. The brevity of Apollinaire's comment on one of Marinetti's books of poetry should, for example, indicate how little he thought it worth analysing what Marinetti had to say ; yet Apollinaire does not dismiss the book, but then, he was seldom a destructive critic -

" ... le livre de Marinetti, 'Zang Tumb Tumb', s'impose à l'attention par la nouveauté de la technique. C'est un livre d'expression métallique qui mérite qu'on s'y arrête." (2)

(1) "Soirées de Paris" 15 fév. 1914 - O.C., t.3, p. 883

(2) "Soirées de Paris" 15 avr. 1914 - O.C., t.3, p. 885

Apollinaire, then, clearly felt that the futurists had little to teach him ; and one is obliged to conclude that he felt his own work to be superior to that of the futurists where there are similarities which must have drawn his attention. (In fact, this is more or less the judgement of posterity which has confined the futurists' literary efforts to histories of literature.)

The relationship with Delaunay and Orphism is much more complex, and it can neither be explained simply by the evidence which points to the greater part of Apollinaire's articles on Delaunay's work having been written by Delaunay himself, nor by limiting the possible influence of Delaunay to the poem "Les Fenêtres". When the evidence has been weighed up, one inclines toward the view which S.I. Lockerie expressed in his analysis of "Les Fenêtres" -

"Aussi bien chez Delaunay que chez Picasso, Apollinaire aura donc choisi les éléments correspondant le mieux à l'exigence qui était au centre de son propre oeuvre." (1)

- but the results, which are what interests us in this study, differ only slightly from the kind of poetry that Apollinaire was producing before his encounter with Delaunay (2). The real problem, in evaluating the precise influence of Delaunay on Apollinaire's theories, is that at this stage in his career, as can be observed from the evidence which we have quoted to support our argument concerning the period 1908 onward, Apollinaire had not yet formulated his theories as theories or manifestos concerning his own writing, in the way that he did between 1916 and 1918. Thus while one may point

(1) R.L.M. 1966 no. 5, p. II

(2) cf. Ch.3 sec.I

to certain concepts such as simultanism, which becomes ostensible in Apollinaire's work at this time, one has no genuine record of his ideas on the subject. Thus more is to be learned from a direct analysis of the poems of this period and this will be found in chapter three.

The very fact, however, that Apollinaire was so attracted to Delaunay's painting as to baptise it "Orphisme", that he regarded what Delaunay was doing as a development of Cubism equalling in importance what Picasso was doing -

"De même, il y a dans la peinture moderne de nouvelles tendances ; les plus importantes me semblent être, d'une part le cubisme de Picasso, d'autre part l'orphisme de Delaunay." (1)

- indicates that there was something which exercised a great attraction for Apollinaire in Delaunay's work. But, if we consider that he was prepared to allow Delaunay to dictate to him the substance of several articles and then to correct and revise these articles, we must come to the conclusion that the painterly aspects of this new trend in art were less important to Apollinaire than the fact that Delaunay's paintings seemed to him to embody in plastic form certain of his ideas concerning poetry.

Chief among these ideas is that of simultanism, and if Apollinaire is generous enough to take no credit for the invention of the term -

"Delaunay, qui par son insistance et son talent a fait sien le terme de simultané qu'il a emprunté au vocabulaire des futuristes, mérite qu'on l'appelle désormais ainsi qu'il signe: le Simultané."(2)

(1) O.C., t.4, p. 281

(2) Ibid. p. 353

- this is typical of his honesty in these matters, yet an analysis of his poetry, and indeed of his prose(1), reveals that there are important aspects of simultanism in his writing from very early on in his career. Undoubtedly, the encounter with Delaunay stimulated Apollinaire, and was in part responsible for his drawing together of various strands of thought which culminated in the writing of "Les Fenêtres" and "Lundi Rue Christine", but both these poems also have roots in ideas which Apollinaire recorded in his earliest notebooks(2). Thus, if one finds Apollinaire signing an article in which simultanism is discussed(3), one may undoubtedly ascribe this formulation of the ideas to the influence of Delaunay (not simply because Delaunay is the subject of this article), but where Apollinaire's poetry is concerned, one must beware of seeing the hand of Delaunay everywhere.

Clearly then, Apollinaire's ideas remained essentially the same from the time of composition of "Les Fiançailles" until the outbreak of the war, or rather his involvement in it. As to the ideas he held during the war, it is extremely difficult to testify. One assumes them to be much the same as those which he expressed afterwards, and his poetry certainly points to this, even if, in his letter-poems, there is a good deal of simplification of style. In a letter to Madeleine, Apollinaire gives an indication that he felt the poetry which he had written shortly before the war was

(1) cf. André Fonteyne - "Apollinaire Prosateur"

(2) cf. notes to the edition of "Calligrammes" by Michel Décaudin (ed. Club du Meilleur Livre.) cf. also Ch. 3, sec. 2 on these poems and "Acousmate"

(3) e.g. "Réalité, peinture pure" O.C., t.4, p.276 et seq.

aesthetically something quite different -

"Puis j'aime ~~beaucoup~~ mes vers depuis 'Alcools', il y en a pour un volume au moins, et j'aime beaucoup, beaucoup 'Les Fenêtres' qui a paru à part en tête d'un catalogue du peintre Delaunay. Ils ressortissent à une esthétique toute neuve dont je n'ai plus depuis retrouvé les ressorts, mais dont j'ai avec étonnement retrouvé l'exposé dans une de vos divines lettres." (1)

- different from what he had written before or since. Thus we are faced with a situation which Apollinaire has not clarified for us; that is to say that his ideas, when they are expressed as such, during this period are much the same as those of the preceding years, but his poetry is, in his own estimation, more radically different from anything else he had written.

On this evidence, and on the evidence of the poems of this period themselves, as they are analysed in chapter three, one must concede that if the basis of Apollinaire's thinking had remained the same, then he had definitely begun to push his ideas a little further. The poem "Arbre", for example, displays what one might almost call a logical extension of the discontinuity and disparate imagery of the poems written some months earlier. Logical, that is, in the sense that the poet appears to be asking the question - "If a poem may have images which are apparently unrelated, and still be a poem, then why can one not write almost any series of lines and images (this time without the unity accorded to them by their all beings things seen or overheard in a certain street at a certain time) and still have written a poem?" (2)

(1) "Tendre comme le souvenir" (lettre du 30 juillet).

(2) For a full analysis^{is} of this poem see Ch. 3, sec. (B).

One must also consider the statement taken from the letter to Madeleine in the light of what Apollinaire wrote after the war, before deciding that the period of "Les Fenêtres" is uniquely different from all other periods of his career. And one certainly cannot say that in a poem such as "La Victoire" Apollinaire did not rediscover some of the aspects of the former, although there are, to be sure, marked differences. The calligrammes also must be considered with "Les Fenêtres" as poetry which certainly offers obvious differences from the rest of Apollinaire's work, but it is more significant to look at the similarities which they offer. (1)

This consideration of Apollinaire's ideas and theories cannot really be separated from the texts, the poems, themselves ; and so it is best to conclude here what has been a rather summary examination of these ideas (of necessity so since the expression of them is also summary apart from the period 1916-1918) and to pass on to an examination of the poetry.

Finally, before leaving this discussion of the evolution of Apollinaire's ideas, perhaps the quotation which best typifies his attitude during the period 1913/14 is the following :-

"Point d'idéal : mais tout ce qui existe : moi-même, mes sens, mon imagination ; les autres leurs sens, leur imagination ; les choses, leurs aspects, leurs propriétés ; les surprises, les êtres qu'elles engendrent et ce qu'elles modifient " (2)

- which will be shown to be appropriate in the ensuing chapters.

(1) cf. appendix to Ch.3

(2) Quoted in Adéma (68) p. 245. Apollinaire's reply to a question "Quel est votre 'idéal d'art'?" put to him by John Charpentier in "La Vie".



CHAPTER TWO : ALCOOLS

SECTION ONE : INTRODUCTION

In this section we shall attempt to isolate and analyse the elements of violence in the poems published in "Alcools" and in the poems contemporary with this volume, which Apollinaire chose to exclude from it. We shall not be concerned with establishing a precise chronology of these poems, but shall rely on the work already done in this field by such eminent scholars as M. Adéma, M. Décaudin and M. Breunig in their various studies. We shall, in fact, be attempting to trace the evolution of the techniques of violence in these poems, but as we have already seen from previous sections, Apollinaire's evolution was not constant, and was affected by a wide variety of stimuli. We shall therefore analyse the poems in groups which may be said to be roughly contemporary, and in the chronological order of the periods represented by those groups.

We propose, then, to begin this section with an analysis of the elements of violence contained in the poems composed in the main before or during 1903, but excluding "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé". The first and most striking characteristic of the elements of violence in these poems is that their obvious source lies in the poet's character. This is a point which we shall come across again and again in the course of this study and it will emerge that violence in poetry is something that was profoundly natural to Apollinaire and not something artificially introduced into his poetry. As examples from the particular poems which concern us at the moment we may take the sexual imagery of "L'Ermite" and also "Merlin et la vieille femme" :

"Le/

"Le soleil ce jour-là s'étalait comme un ventre
Maternel qui saignait lentement sur le ciel" (1)

"O Seigneur flagellez les nuées du coucher

Qui vous tendent au ciel de si jolis culs roses" (2)

The genesis of these images most probably lies in the sexual preoccupations of the adolescent that Apollinaire was when he wrote these poems ; certainly they fail to attain any kind of transcendence of the vulgarly sexual to become real shock images to the adult, sophisticated reader, although they are both more or less relevant to their contexts, there being especially a certain parallel between the condition of the hermit and the young Apollinaire. Similar types of images are to be found in the erotic poetry which Apollinaire published later in his life and it is interesting to note that when seeking to be scabrous he reverted to a very adolescent form of sexual morbidity (3).

There is no doubt that the images from the two early poems were meant to shock, but there is no doubt either where their roots lie. However, there are elements of violence in the poems of this period which are more interesting to us. Elements which equally have their roots in the character of Apollinaire but which betray more permanent tendencies.

The desire to shock is clearly seen in such images as :

"Le grand soleil païen fait mourir en mourant
Avec les bourgs lointains le Christ indifférent" (4)

(1) "Merlin" O.P., p. 88

(2) "L'Ermite" O.P., p. 100

(3) cf. for example "Julie ou j'ai prêté ma rose"

(4) "Passion" O.P., p. 532

Here it is especially the final adjective which is intended to strike home. True, one may say that the victory of the pagan sun-god over the Christ is also meant to shock, but the real weight of the blasphemy is carried by the description of Christ as indifferent. Already Apollinaire is compressing the shock element into as compact a form as possible, knowing it to be all the more effective for this. One notes also the first traces of what was to be for Apollinaire a fruitful source of shock images - namely blasphemy. (This is as true of his prose as of his poetry - consider "L'Hérésiarque et Cie.") (1)

This desire to scandalise is also present in the poem "Le Dôme de Cologne" :

"Ton dernier architecte ô Dôme devint fou
Ça prouve clairement que le bon Dieu se fout
De ceux qui travaillent à sa plus grande gloire" (2)

But this poem also contains an image which is so fantastical, so strange, that it surprises and transports the reader to a completely different world :

"Mais sois moderne et que tes prêtres déifiques
Tendent entre tes tours des fils télégraphiques
Et tu deviendras luth" (3)

In this case the effectiveness of the image stems from the fact that it is not just a simple comparison of the towers and the frame of a lute, the poet transforms the one into the other before our eyes as it were, and thus accords the image the power necessary to

(1) On this point consult "Apollinaire Prosateur" by André Fonteyne.

(2) "Le Dôme de Cologne" O.P., p. 538

(3) Ibid.

its success. Although it retains something of the baroque conceit, it makes us laugh and is much more effective because it seeks neither to convey to the reader some strange correspondence between the two elements, nor is it a decorative image. Rather it is an image which rises out of the context of the description of the cathedral to become important in its own right. By contrast, such power is lacking in the following image, which retains the essential characteristic of a description -

"La source est là comme un oeil clos

Pleurant avec de frais sanglots

La naissance triste de l'eau" (1)

- a description which, moreover, we might classify as baroque.

But in "Le Larron" we find a similar yet significantly different image, still essentially baroque in its conception, but expressed with a brevity and force to be found in the later fantastical imagery of "Alcools" :

"Colonnes de clins d'yeux qui fuyaient aux éclairs" (2)

The reduction of the columns of soldiers to blinks of the eye is striking and conveys the desired impression of the swiftness of the passage of time - yet one has to stop and think about the image, it cannot be said to create its own poetic world (like the lines from "L'Emigrant" quoted in the first section of chapter one) but due to its compression it does have considerably more force than the preceding example.

If Apollinaire was not yet adept at creating the type of image which exists in its own world, he was already quite skilful at

(1) "Elégie du voyageur aux pieds blessés" O.P., p. 337

(2) "Le Larron" O.P., p. 91

adding a destructive element which completely changes the effect of the image on the reader. This he did not without a certain humour which is more than a little anarchistic :

"Tandis qu'au fil du Rhin s'en allaient des bateaux

A vapeur

(I)

Clearly, this reveals a certain pleasure on the poet's part in pricking the romantic balloon ; the line-break neatly divides the sentence so that the first line presents a romantic picture of the Rhine which is destroyed by the transmutation of the boats, which one had pictured as sailing boats, into noisy steam ships. This tells us something about Apollinaire's nature ; his ready laughter and his abrupt nature were things which all his friends commented on, and the following quotation from Marcel Adéma's biography will serve as a ready illustration (the context is the meeting of Apollinaire and Max Jacob) :

" . . . 'Sans cesser son discours vigoureux sur les empereurs romains, dira Max Jacob, et sans me regarder il me tendit sa main courte et forte (on pensait patte de tigre). Brusquement il se leva et nous entraîna dans la nuit avec de grands éclats de rire ; alors commencèrent ces interminables flâneries qui pendant des années furent quotidiennes . . . '" (2)

Another of Apollinaire's friends of the period, and one whose nature would also delight in images such as the one quoted above, was Alfred Jarry. Undoubtedly his meeting with Jarry did much to confirm the presence in Apollinaire's poetry of just that humorous element which Apollinaire urged others not to forget in his

(I) "Rolandseck" O.P., p. 351

(2) Adéma (68) p. 106

manifesto "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poètes". Nor was the presence of that humour solely destructive, for if in the above quotation its point is being used to deflate the too ready sentimentality of the Rhineland scene, in the same poem we find this skilfully constructed image :

"Sur la route bordant le fleuve et tachée d'ombre

Fuyaient tremblant de peur

Comme des chevaliers indignes les autos"

While there is obviously present here the same destructive element turned against the picturesque, there is also a comic vision which borders on the surreal. It is an image in which the two contrasting worlds are so integrated that the final result is the creation of a new world altogether. The construction of the sentence which at the very last second transforms the image into this juxtaposition of the old world and the new, forces us to laugh, where a simple comparison would have had no effect at all.

In these early poems this humorous element is the clearest indication we have of the violence of Apollinaire's style. As we have pointed out here and in the introduction, it is not merely destructive humour, although it must be partly this, it is creative as well. Occasionally his humour touches on that inspired absurdity which is to be found in "Les Mamelles de Tirésias" and perhaps even in certain passages of "Les Collines" ; for if we compare this image -

"Un phonographe énamouré pour dix pfennigs

Chanta l'amour à quatre voix de chanteurs morts" (I)

with a verse from "Les Collines" which we shall have occasion to

(I) "Mille Regrets" O.P., p. 531

examine at length in the following chapter -

"Tous sont morts le maître d'hôtel

Leur verse un champagne irréel

Qui mousse comme un escargot

Ou comme un cerveau de poète" (I)

would we not be justified in concluding that it was the same sense of the absurd, the same force of the imagination which informs and vitalises both images, even if the former is undoubtedly more trivial than the latter? The mainspring of both these images is their assault on common sense, their denial of the real, of the universe of cause and effect as we know it. By ascribing to the inanimate object the ability to fall in love, by continuing the action after he has begun with the phrase 'everyone is dead', Apollinaire is placing his poem well outside the scope of our normal apprehensions of reality and therefore denying us the occasion both to foresee what will happen and to let our own imaginations take over the poem. We are forced to accept the whims of the poet's imagination. Obviously the quotation from the poem written in the Rhineland is only the embryo of the later development shown in "Les Collines" but the essential is already there.

This kind of anarchistic use of language has, of course, a ready-made vehicle in the pun, but strangely enough there are very few examples of really creative puns in Apollinaire's early work. Perhaps we can best illustrate our meaning here by comparing two examples. The first shows only a play on words which, while not at all forced or inappropriate to the context, is nevertheless fairly banal and uninspired -

(I) O.P. p.176 & cf. also Ch.3 sec.10, pp. 449 -450

"L'entrelacs de leurs doigts fut leur seul laps d'amour" (I)
 - uninspired, because the pun does not rise above the level of decoration ; it does not oppose two meanings ascribable to the one sound ; it does not really change for us the meaning of the elements.
 On the contrary, this example -

"La tzigane savait d'avance
 Nos deux vies barrées par les nuits
 Nous lui dîmes adieux et puis
 De ce puits sortit l'Espérance" (2)

- makes use of the coincidence of sound to draw together two opposed attitudes ; the banal "and then" which seems to indicate that there can be no hope after the gypsy's doom-laden prediction, becomes the well from which hope is drawn. But because the pun ties the two things together, the reader realises that the hope which the poet does find, is a forlorn hope. The pun here says for Apollinaire what the paradox of the line from "Le Pont Mirabeau" said some years later :

"Et comme l'Espérance est violente" (3)

It does not seem excessive to us to insist on this essentially subversive aspect of this use of language, the violence that is done to the expectations already forming in the reader's mind by the metamorphosis of the word. If therefore the idea of the creative pun exists in Apollinaire's early work, this is an example of it.

The choice of the poem "La Tzigane" to illustrate the fore-

(I) "Merlin" O.P., p. 88

(2) "La Tzigane" O.P., p. 99

(3) O.P., p. 45

going point serves us very well as a means of underlining one very important aspect of Apollinaire's early poetry in general, namely that it is for the most part in a fairly polished and accomplished style which on the whole owes very little to the concept of violence as we have defined it, and as Apollinaire himself came to consider it. The violence that is present in these poems remains in embryo form ; a line here, a line there, which is calculated to outrage, to shock ; the occasional fantastical image which rises out of its context to attain an existence in its own right ; a beginning of a use of language which distorts normal usage ; all this is but a promise of what is to come. If we consider "La Tzigane" as a whole, the example we have taken from it can be seen to be the only thing in the poem which is relevant to the ideas of violence which we are discussing here, and that the poem is a polished successful work of art of a more or less traditional kind. Thus while we insist on the importance of the elements of violence which we have isolated in the poems of the period under discussion, we do not wish to claim that they are paramount in this period of the poet's style or even as immediate hints of what was to follow as one might say the line of verse extended to bursting point in an early poem such as "La Synagogue" is -

"Le vieux Rhin soulève sa face ruisselante et se détourne

/pour sourire" (I)

- since it foreshadows the prosaic expression of "Zone". (Or perhaps one might also say the construction of the poem "Les Femmes" from snatches of dialogue which may be seen as the ancestor of the "poèmes-conversation" in "Calligrammes".) That is to say

(I) O.P., p. II3

that the elements of violence are undoubtedly present, perhaps not fully developed, perhaps lacking the polish of their later developments, though not always, and in this they are as worthy of our attention as all the other latent elements of Apollinaire's later poetry which have been discerned in his early work.

In concluding this section we think it relevant to point out that all the poems which have been referred to here, with the exception of the three earliest, "Merlin et la vieille femme", "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron", are short poems and are confined to the brief lyrical expression of an experience. As such they present nothing like the challenge to Apollinaire's powers of expression that the "Chanson du Mal-Aimé" must have offered, with its consequent stimulus to the development of the poet's technique. Thus we propose to examine that poem separately, in the next section.

CHAPTER TWO

SECTION TWO : LA CHANSON DU MAL-AIME

If we have chosen to deal separately with "La Chanson" it is, as we have said, because it is a composition which must have presented a considerable technical challenge to Apollinaire and as such it was bound to have a radical effect upon the style of the poet, especially given his age and the stage of his evolution. On the other hand, while it is true that the poem was indeed a catalyst to his evolution, those elements in it which can be recognised as elements of violence will be seen to have evolved comparatively little, although his use of surprise imagery, particularly in conveying the conflict of his feelings, does show a greater awareness of the potential of this aspect of his poetry. But violence here remains a tool of an aesthetic that is basically different from that which informed his later poetry.(I)

The elements of violence, then, which we shall isolate in this poem will not appear to be major aspects of it, although their importance will be readily accepted. Generally speaking, for example, there are the many abrupt changes of tone for which the poet is famous ; the numerous emotional volte-faces which never allow the reader to settle into any one mood, and which prevent the poem from becoming too self-indulgent in its lament for a lost love. These clearly have their origin in the feelings of the poet, but it is especially the manner in which they are expressed that is interesting and original. Scarcely has the reader had time to recognise

(I) cf. "Alcools et le Symbolisme" by S.I. Lockerie in R.L.M.,
Nos. 85-89 1963

one emotion than it is coloured by another or even destroyed by the irony of the following phrase :

"Et moi j'ai le coeur aussi gros

Qu'un cul de dame damascène" (I)

The complexity of the emotions felt by the poet is expressed in the violence of his style which almost never leaves a pure image. Here we must consider the construction of the poem as a whole, for this is not at all a narrative poem, in spite of the many narrative and autobiographical elements contained in it.

"Avec celle que j'ai perdue"

L'année dernière en Allemagne"

Anyone knowing the background to the poem might well suppose that this is simply a biographical detail thrown into the poem, because the poem concerns something which really happened to the poet, but surely these lines are just as valid when considered as an expression of the temporal and spatial distance which separates Apollinaire from the woman he loved. One might also point to the existence of a spatial progression in the poem as being its narrative framework ; the progression from London to Paris, which can be equated with the temporal progression from presence to absence of the woman, but their importance is only secondary. The poem as a whole is a sequence of images which merge into one another, contrast with one another and even destroy one another, and as such their function is not narrative but evocative. This being the case, the image acquires a certain autonomous importance, as the universal expression of a sentiment, and it is this character of the image which is interesting to us. (In this respect the images of "La Chanson" may be seen as the fore-

(I) O.P., pp. 46-59 as are all other quotations from this poem.

runners of the images of "Le Voyageur"(I).)

"Malheur dieu pâle aux yeux d'ivoire

Tes prêtres fous t'ont-ils paré

Tes victimes en robes noires

Ont-elles vainement pleuré

Malheur dieu pâle qu'il ne faut pas croire"

The image, but for the irresistible rhythm of the poem, would rise out of its context and imprint itself indelibly on the reader's mind ; as it is, it is powerful, emotive, but it passes like a cinematographic image, to give way to another, the rhythm playing the role of the continuity of the film. The reader experiences a certain conflict as he is struck by the power of this image which seeks to hold his attention, while the rhythm and structure of the poem as a whole lead him onwards to the next verse. In the later poems where Apollinaire used "vers libre" this conflict is avoided, and the images are freer, more powerful because of it.

The narrative thread of the poem, which is clearly recognisable, is continually interrupted. The reader is no more allowed to grasp the guide line of a story than he is allowed the luxury of a pure and sustained mood. We are not yet at the stage of "Les Fiançailles", but clearly the way to this later development is being opened here. In this particular case it is the personification which makes the strength of the image, there is not yet present the element of interior violence which is to be found in the later poems and which, as we shall see, is due to the handling of the language as often as to the nature of the image itself. We refer, of course, to images such as that quoted in the first section of chapter one -

(I) cf. Ch.2, sec.5, pp. 180-195

"Soleil cou coupé"

- which comes from the poem "Zone". It is obvious that in comparison the syntax of the verse from "La Chanson" is straightforward.

One element of violence in the poem which immediately springs to mind is the episode of the Cosaques Zaporogues. Although the structure of the poem introduces this section as the reply of the Christian (?) cossacks to a Muslim sultan who demands that they submit to his overlordship, there can be no doubt that it is intended to express Apollinaire's hate for the woman who has deserted him. The form of this passage, then, is extremely interesting to us, for it is not simply a case of Apollinaire saying "I hate you", but is rather an expression of that hate in terms which do not in any way spare the reader's feelings. The obscenity of this passage may be aimed only indirectly at the "faux amour" (since it is overtly addressed to the cossacks) but the reader, on the other hand, is brought into direct contact with it. He is made to feel the full force of the author's feelings. Its effect is undoubtedly therapeutic. By allowing himself to descend to the lowest level of insult the poet purges himself through this articulation of his hate, and purges the reader also, of the guilt which both he and the reader feel throughout the poem. Thus he allows the expression of his still remaining tenderness and hope that the woman will return -

"Mais en vérité je l'attends

Avec mon coeur avec mon âme

Et sur le pont des reviens-t-en

Si jamais revient cette femme

Je lui dirai Je suis content"

- to be all the fresher and all the more touching. This is the importance of the episode of the Cosaques Zaporogues in the poem.

It is not an element of gratuitous violence ; on the contrary, its violence is a means of expression, as direct as is possible, of the feelings which torment the poet ; the reader is made to feel them. But it is none the less interesting to us for that. It is as clear and deliberate a use of violence as exists in Apollinaire's poetry up to this time. Having said this, it is important to note that this is a case of the violence of the poet's experience being the source of the violence of the imagery.

There is another source of violence in the poem which we have already touched on. We have spoken about abrupt changes of tone, the continual upsetting of the reader's expectations. The subject matter of the imagery has a great role to play in this. We have already seen how the over-sentimental is quickly deflated -

"Le grand Pan l'amour Jésus-Christ
Sont bien morts et les chats miaulent
Dans la cour je pleure à Paris"

- (which procedure we have already seen in the image cited from "Rolandseck" in the preceding section). But the reader's sensibility is also brutalised by the rapid switching from classical to modern to mythical elements in the imagery -

"Nous semblions entre les maisons
Onde ouverte de la mer Rouge
Lui les Hébreux moi Pharaon"

- The effectiveness of this image lies in its strangeness and in its total unexpectedness, its weird juxtaposition of modern London and ancient Egypt. The spectacle of a drunken, scarred lout staggering out of a tavern is followed by the return of Ulysses to Ithaca and to his faithful wife. These disparate elements are assembled, each with its own evocative function, into a unity which

is that of the poem itself. Perhaps those critics who thought that Apollinaire learned the art of collage from Picasso should have looked more closely at "La Chanson" before pronouncing on the matter. The unity and harmony of the whole arises from its power, which welds together the many disparate elements which the poet has assembled.

Thus while this poem may be considered as the forerunner of poems like "Le Voyageur" and "Les Fiançailles", it is also in one way the opposite of what Apollinaire was trying to do in these later poems, for as we shall see (I), the lack of cohesion among the various elements which compose those two poems has a very definite function to fulfil in them - namely to modify through the liberty and autonomy of the image the nature of the poem itself, the nature of the poetic experience. In "La Chanson" the poet does not seek the total independence of the image, but rather, by bringing together the apparently unconnected images and then linking them by means of the rhythmical and musical structure of the verses, he seeks to express the paradoxical nature, the turbulence of his feelings. Thus verses like the following -

"L'amour est mort j'en suis tremblant
J'adore de belles idoles
Les souvenirs lui ressemblant
Comme la femme de Mausole
Je reste fidèle et dolent"

are rich in levels of contradictory feelings, as are the two juxtaposed verses below :

"Je ne veux jamais l'oublier

(I) cf. Ch.2, sec.5 and also Ch.2, sec.4

Ma colombe ma blanche rade
 O marguerite exfoliée
 Mon fle au loin ma Désirade
 Ma rose mon giroflier
 Les satyres et les pyraustes
 Les égyptans les feux follets
 Et les destins damnés ou faustes
 La corde au cou comme à Calais
 Sur ma douleur quel holocauste"

In other words, the use of what we have called techniques of violence is subordinated to the traditional lyrical needs of expression instead of becoming an instrument in the creation of a new lyricism, as they were later to be for Apollinaire.

Nevertheless the beginnings of these important aspects of the poet's later style are clearly present in this poem, just as the construction of the poem from separate passages foreshadows the construction of "Les Fiançailles", these passages having a relationship to one another which adds to the significance of the whole (I) ; e.g. the independent "Aubade" being the celebration of the love announced at the end of the preceding section as well as constituting the elegy that the following section destroys.

Finally we may close this section by pointing out that the images of real physical violence and suffering do not at all act in the same way upon the sensibility of the reader as do the violent transitions from one image to another, where the author has attempted to make the reader feel the paradoxical nature of what he is saying. For example, the translation of emotional suffering into physical

(I) cf. Ch.2, secs.4 & 5

suffering that is present in the following passage -

"Pour chauffer un coeur plus glacé

Que les quarante de Sébaste

Moins que ma vie martyrisés"

- is effective in all the ways that the poet intends, but it does not shock or wound the reader. Nor could one say that this was the case with the verse which precedes the "Sept Epées" :

"Sept épées de mélancolie

Sans morfil & claires douleurs

Sont dans mon coeur"

If one speaks of violence with regard to "La Chanson", then one may say that these images contribute to the general atmosphere, but are much less violent for the reader than such passages as "Réponse des Cosaques Zaporogues". It is nonetheless proper to speak of violence in this poem, for as we have shown the poet employs various techniques which clearly belong in this category - and no less interesting to us is the fact that an enterprise of this magnitude should have led him to employ almost all the aspects of violence that we have seen in the several poems already examined.

CHAPTER TWO : SECTION THREE

PICASSO AND MAX JACOB

"De la rencontre de ces trois hommes, de leur contact et de leur amitié va jaillir une esthétique nouvelle, un "Esprit Nouveau". Elle va ouvrir le second cycle apollinarien."(1)

Thus Marcel Adéma describes the meeting of Apollinaire and Picasso and the meeting between Apollinaire and Max Jacob. These meetings which took place towards the end of 1904 were indeed to change the life and the thought of Apollinaire and were to have a profound and lasting effect on his poetry. In no way, however, should one assume, as did Georges Duhamel in the case of Jacob(2) and as others have done in the case of Picasso, that Apollinaire was merely an imitator of what was new and exciting in the ideas and works of the two others. We have shown how even in his earliest poems there are the beginnings of a style which consciously and on an important scale exploits the concept of violence as a literary device and we intend to show that from this time onwards this aspect of the poet's style takes on more and more importance and that its exploitation becomes more and more ambitious in its goals. Clearly the meeting of these three men was the meeting of three minds whose ideas had much in common and who were all encouraged to

(1) Adéma p. 75

(2) "Qui mieux est, je reconnais dans les accents du poète d'Alcools des inflexions de voix plus prochaines : celle par exemple de Max Jacob dont Apollinaire admire à coup sûr l'invention et la science psychologique . . ." Criticism published in Mercure de France, 16th June 1913.

pursue the further and more daring development of these ideas as a result of this meeting.

Certainly immediate traces of the influence of both Picasso and Jacob are to be found in Apollinaire's poetry, but there are obvious reservations to be made about the importance of these more concrete influences. In this section we propose to examine the poems "Palais" and "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" and to show from this examination that the success of the latter, which was in all probability written before the meeting (1) with Picasso and Jacob, is much greater than that of the former even though the former is intended as an exorcism of the kind of poetry that Apollinaire was writing under the influence of his feelings for Annie, of which group the latter was part. That this was the case and that this is an important factor in our consideration of the poetry of Apollinaire, is due to the fact that "Palais" suffers too much from the undigested influence of Max Jacob. This can therefore be offered as a further proof of Apollinaire's originality in this field.

"Palais" is dedicated to Jacob and in its tone of burlesque, of pastiche, it is very much akin to his poetry and foreign to that of Apollinaire. In the whole of "Alcools" there is really only the poem "Clair de Lune"(2), apart from "Palais", which seeks to be a direct burlesque of another mode of poetry. Furthermore, "Palais" is an unfinished and imperfectly worked out piece, as M.Décaudin shows :

"Nous en connaissons au moins quatre états : les trois versions

(1) Déc. p. 170

(2) O.P., p. 137 e.g. "Les astres assez bien figurent les abeilles"

- the symbolism of scene is not taken at all seriously.

publiés et un brouillon, très raturé, écrit sur des feuilles arrachées à un registre ; il est inachevé ; le poète semble à bout de souffle et n'a pas encore trouvé la résolution des jeux d'images auxquels il s'est abandonné. On le voit chercher l'inattendu : juxtaposition de plusieurs registres d'images, allusion grossièretés de vocabulaires . . ."(1)

and it is perhaps not too much to conjecture that the poem was proving so difficult to write because it was not only a form of renunciation of his past but because its form and expression were too foreign to the poet.

If Madame Durré could say :

"Un début dégradé, défait, nié par la fin, les pensées et le rêve changés en aliments corrompus et bâfrés, l'allégorie narguée par l'allégorie, la correspondance par la correspondance, tout me prouve que le poème met en accusation l'Ecole symboliste."(2)

- we may also say that the poem is an attempt at exorcising the poet's own past, for how much of his early poetry, major pieces as well as minor, is written in the symbolist style! (3)

But let us examine the poem in more detail, and in particular the elements of violence which we may find in it. In the first place the poem falls into two distinct parts which contrast very strongly ; the first being bathed in the atmosphere of the symbolist allegory (personified thoughts seeking their goal in a mysterious palace)

(1) cf. Déc. p. 110

(2) cf. Durré vol. 2, p.46

(3) cf. S.I. Lockerbie "Alcools et le symbolisme" R.L.M., Nos. 85-89, 1963.

even though containing various hints that it should not be taken entirely seriously, the second very much farcical in tone, revealing that the palace contains nothing but trivialities, and containing an extremely grotesque banquet scene. As Madame Durré says : "... le vrai choc a été donné au moment où, du premier mouvement du poème, on a passé au second, qui nie le premier." (1) But as we have said, the first part of the poem contains hints that it should not be taken too seriously : the poet's thoughts go bare-foot, the background music is the croaking of frogs etc., and so the effect of shock is attenuated because some distance has been established already between the reader and the poem. The reader is not too involved in the poem precisely because these elements of burlesque are already present in the first half. And so, if Madame Durré can say of the second part :

"La critique du poème s'est introduite dans le poème et avec elle tout a commencé à pourrir sur place." (2)

We place certain reservations upon our agreement for the reasons given above. This element of interpenetration in the poem weakens the effects of shock and is noticeably absent from "La Chanson" which contains just as many conflicting and mutually hostile elements as "Palais". But in "La Chanson" the irony the poet feels is made to act retrospectively on his self-pity which is allowed its own pure expression first :

"Beaucoup de ces dieux ont péri

C'est sur eux que pleurent les saules

Le grand Pan l'amour Jésus-Christ

(1) cf. Durré, vol.2 p. 42

(2) *ibid.*

Sont bien morts et les chats miaulent" (I)

On the other hand the all-pervasiveness of the light-hearted and mocking tone is precisely a common feature of the poetry of Max Jacob, it is a sort of self-defensive irony.(2) No doubt in seeking to separate himself from a part of his past Apollinaire had need of an ironic shell.

But the poem does have this very serious level which we have indicated - this element of separation from the past. In the last stanza of the poem :

"Ah! nom de Dieu! qu'ont crié ces entrecôtes

Ces grands pâtés ces os à moelle et mirotons

Langues de feu où sont-elles mes pentecôtes

Pour mes pensées de tous pays de tous les temps"(3)

- the poet is clearly renouncing the ability, or the claim to the ability, to communicate to all men on things spiritual. He is abandoning the symbolist conception of poetry and is prepared to put everything into the melting-pot. Even so, within the poem is the same thread of shock tactics which may be discerned in the earlier poems and which he was to develop in his later ones. For if the major shock element of the poem, the contrast between the two parts, is not entirely successful, there are nonetheless the various irreverences (Des rôtis de pensées mortes dans mon cerveau"/ the rhyme "entrecôte"- "pentecôte", "Dame de mes pensées au cul de perle fine" etc.) which are there to surprise the reader. Thus while the poem is in some respects a dead end, there are still these elements of

(1) La Chanson du Mal-Aimé, p. 50

(2) cf. "Le Cheval" quoted Durrty op.cit. 2. p.28

(3) Palais, O.P., p.62

the later style to remind us of the direction his poetry was to take.

In contrast, "L'Emigrant de Landor Road", although it is an earlier poem and one which forms part of the Annie cycle, shows that the poet was developing the element of violence in his style under his own impetus. In the very first stanza of the poem we find an image which is unique in the poetry of Apollinaire up to this date :

"Ce commerçant venait de couper quelques têtes

De mannequins vêtus comme il faut qu'on se vête" (I)

and also an image which separates very nicely for us the strands of physical and literary violence, for although the image of decapitation creates the mood of cruelty by one person to another, the fact that the image is introduced humorously and that the mannequin victims are not real people, means that we do not react to the image as we would to the experience (even second hand) of real physical violence ; nonetheless the image is an image of violence for it is totally unexpected and so strange that the reader is displaced, as it were, by the image, from his own world into that, unreal, of the poem. Certain critics, among them M. Décaudin, have said of this poem that Apollinaire is here masking his bitterness with humour, that he is hiding his real feelings as he hides the real significance of the poem in the title. This is undoubtedly so, but his real feelings are present in the poem, and can be guessed at by the reader even should he be ignorant of the significance of the title. (Landor Road was where Annie Playden's parents had their home, and where Apollinaire had called on her in London before she

(I) "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" O.P., p. 105

left for America.) Undoubtedly also this fusion of surface humour and underlying grief and bitterness is brought about through this initial image. This is the real power of the image, that it can express real suffering in an apparently humorous way, and its ability to do this depends on its unexpectedness, its violence being brought to bear on the sensibility of the reader. If the whimsy and humour are already apparent in the first line of the poem :

"Le chapeau à la main, il entra, du pied droit"

- they in no

way prepare the reader for the strangeness of the third which is all the more violent for ending on the word "têtes", so that fleetingly one has the impression of real violence before this is modulated by the carry-over into the next line and "De mannequins...". But we are not allowed to feel that real murders have taken place, for this would be really alien to the poem's atmosphere ; therefore our reaction is to the fantastic quality of the image, to its strangeness. The poet has somehow tricked us into crossing the threshold with the comic figure he introduces in the first line, and we find ourselves in a disquieting world where :

"Et des mains vers le ciel plein de lacs de lumière

S'envolaient quelquefois comme des oiseaux blancs"

If this image has a certain logic of its own : the white of a hand that is waving becoming the white of a bird flying away : it is no less disquieting to the reader, not so much because it too is an image of the disintegration of the human body, but because it is removed from the normal world of cause and effect that we are accustomed to. It supports the previous image in giving a feeling of "dépaysement" (1). And in this strange new world the bitterness

(1) The term is André Fonteyne's, cf. "Apollinaire Prosateur" passim.

that lies behind the humour is apparent. The disintegration of the normal world is reflected in the beheading of the mannequins, in the hands leaving the arms that are waving them - one is tempted to describe both these images as black humour, but whatever one calls them, it cannot be denied that they are a successful blend of pain and humour.

The sixth stanza of the poem expresses quite overtly the pain which is only partly concealed in the images discussed above. Apart from the purely visual aspect which is lent by the difference in verse form and which serves to underline the stanza, as it were, the end words of the last two lines - *victimes, enchaînées* - make the entire stanza more painful than humorous. Although again it is the strangeness of the image which makes it effective - the vision of the emigrant's past as a line of chained convicts looking at the beheaded dummies in the window of the tailor's shop, belongs to the fantasy world of the poem and might well seem absurd to the reader were it not for the way in which the poet has already drawn us into that world. Nevertheless this image carries its own elements of surprise and suddenness to force it past the reader's sense of the ridiculous and to turn any laughter on his part into a "rire jaune"; this task is performed mainly by the rhythm of the stanza which joins "Au dehors" to "les années", thus personifying the latter, before the reader has the chance to object; and the rhythm also in being more heavily accented in its phrasing, more staccato than the rest of the poem, carries the suggestion of the movement of a file of men chained together. In some ways this image also serves as an introduction to the next stanza, the personified years becoming personified days.

This stanza leaves behind even the element of reality that

was present in the scene in the tailor's shop, but here again we are confronted with a mixture of pain and humour and suggestions of unfaithfulness in love. Here the strangeness of the "journées veuves", the rather exaggerated sadness of the "vendredis sanglants" and the humour of the last line, which sounds like some old country saying to explain bad weather, switch rapidly and in an almost arbitrary fashion the sensations communicated to the reader, and in so doing reveal the reality of the pain that lies behind the mask of humour, because each is shown to be some kind of mask as it is succeeded by the next - the poet therefore implies what is behind, and this must be pain and unhappiness as this is the only common element of the imagery. But again we must insist that the ability to fuse these two apparently contradictory elements so that the reader is aware of them both, and the relationship which governs them, is due to the surprise element which springs the images upon the reader, and creates continuously the interior logic of the poem's own world where this fusion is a truth.

It is also worth remarking at this point that the entire stanza with only one minor modification ("C'étaient" replaces "viendront") is taken from a poem which Apollinaire had composed some years previously - "Adieux" (I). Again we see, as we saw with the "Aubade" in the "Chanson", that Apollinaire was quite willing to use early poems as sources of material for others. This technique, for it is a technique, was to be developed to play a very important role as in "Les Fiançailles" where as we shall see, the extracts taken from the earlier poems have a dual function to fulfil ; that is that they must not only be a part of the poem "Les Fiançailles"

in their own right, but must also stand as examples of the kind of poetry which Apollinaire is saying he has abandoned, for "Les Fiançailles" does more effectively what the poet attempts to do in "Palais". In the context of "L'Emigrant", however, the extract from the earlier poem is completely integrated so that the reader is not aware that it is taken from elsewhere. This is also true of the last stanza which is taken from the poem "Printemps"(1) which provided much of the material which Apollinaire used in "Les Fiançailles". However, at this stage it remains a technique which is invisible to the reader - one might call it a stop-gap.

In the tenth stanza there is an image which functions, as it were, at the wave of a magic wand :

"Un tout petit bouquet flottant à l'aventure
Couvrit l'Océan d'une immense floraison"

- it is a sudden transformation of the scene which is described to us in rather over-sentimental terms, and its effect is rather like that of a conjuror producing a rabbit from a top hat. We are surprised and delighted by it. It is a metamorphosis wrought by the enchanter, a role that Apollinaire never ceased to claim was his and one which was to be fundamental to his idea of "surnaturalisme" and "surréalisme" as when in a poem such as "Océan de Terre"(2) he changes one object into another :

"J'ai bâti une maison au milieu de l'Océan
Ses fenêtres sont les fleuves qui s'écoulaient de mes yeux"(3)

These then are the images of violence in "L'Emigrant", they

(1) O.P., p. 556

(2) O.P., p. 268

(3) cf. Ch.3, sec.8, pp. 355 - 359

are indispensable to the success of the poem, they create the atmosphere which is essential if the poem is to communicate to the reader the poet's real feelings. It seems to us quite fair to say that this poem is far more successful than "Palais" and that this is because "L'Emigrant" sprang directly from Apollinaire's own experience whereas "Palais" is a pastiche, and also a poem which sets out to discuss aesthetics. We do not think it unjustified to see in this the hand of Max Jacob, chief among those who turned against Apollinaire the cry which he and others had used to disrupt the "Soirées de la Plume" "Toujours trop symboliste!". A third poem written about this time, "Salomé"(I), may help to throw a little light on both these poems. In his book "Le Dossier d'Alcools", M. Décaudin has said of "Salomé" :

"Cruauté inconsciente et un peu folle, se résolvant dans une ritournelle comique, monde de fantaisie ; comme dans 'L'Emigrant de Landor Road', le jeu et l'ironie sont un masque à la douleur."(2) - indeed it is, but it is also a burlesque of a favourite symbolist theme, and while it is true that Apollinaire had never been a member of any symbolist group the fact that he wrote this poem as a mockery of their ideas seems to lend support to our hypothesis that he was subject to external pressures which made him want to dissociate himself from symbolism and its adherents.

And so we see Apollinaire question his own talents in "Palais", for in that last stanza he is not only rejecting the symbolist concept of poetry but also his own poetic abilities. He is about to enter a period of crisis during which he will publish nothing for a

(I) O.P., p. 86

(2) Déc., p. 140

whole year. And so the tone of "Palais" is the tone of another man :

"La dédicace à Max Jacob éclaire l'inspiration de ce poème publié pour la première fois en novembre 1905 dans la Revue Littéraire de Paris et de Champagne. Apollinaire s'essaie à la fantaisie dont son nouvel ami lui donne, dans les histoires qu'il raconte, des exemples d'une liberté déconcertante."(1)

And "Palais" is the poorer poem for it. It is in many ways a retrograde step from the position reached by Apollinaire in "L'Emigrant", but it did not, as we shall see, send him off on the wrong path for good.

Perhaps the principal difference which one may point to between these two poems, "Palais" and "L'Emigrant de Landor Road", is that the former appears as a poem which has had its shock effects grafted on to it, in order to ridicule its theme, whereas the latter is completely unified ; its shock effects are an integral part of the poem, necessary to the expression of the poet's feelings.

(1) Déc., pp. 109-110

CHAPTER TWO : SECTION FOUR

1907 - 1908

In this section we shall be concerned with the poems which Apollinaire wrote in 1907 and 1908, poems more ambitious by far than any he had attempted up to this point in his career and which mark the end of the period of crisis which he had undergone since the unhappy end to his affair with Annie. During the time in which these poems were written Apollinaire met Marie Laurencin and became more and more interested in the activities of those painters who were included in the group of his friends and acquaintances. It was a period of intense stimulation for him, both intellectually and sentimentally and although he had already produced the majority of the poems which were eventually to make up "Alcools", most of the poems which he wrote at this time and indeed up to the publication of "Alcools", are among the most interesting in that book, whether by virtue of their ambitious nature ("Les Fiançailles") or by the simple perfection of their lyrical expression ("Le Pont Mirabeau"). However, the poems which shall concern us principally in this section are "Lul de Faltenin", "Le Brasier", "Onirocritique" and "Les Fiançailles".

These poems represent by far the most significant development to date in Apollinaire's use of violence ; the perfection of his technique of juxtaposing apparently unrelated fragments is achieved in these poems and the importance of "Onirocritique" as one of the sources of surrealism, both Apollinaire's and that of the surrealists, is universally accepted. If at the same time Apollinaire was tempted by the ideas of the neo-symbolists under Jean Royère, and these have left their marks upon his poetry, his own profound originality as

well as his dislike of schools made sure that his poetry remained his own just as much during this period as later in his career. We shall also explore in this section the influence of Picasso and the cubists on Apollinaire's poetry and shall show that while there are indeed certain important similarities between the two, Apollinaire was not merely trying to translate the plastic experiments of the cubists into literary terms and indeed that the term cubist when applied to the poetry of Apollinaire is meaningless. We have already seen in the section dealing with "La Chanson" that Apollinaire was using what some critics have called the technique of collage some time before he even met Picasso, and the development of collage as a pictorial technique did not come about for some time after that.

We begin by looking at the poem "Lul de Faltenin", which Apollinaire probably wrote in November of 1907, and which in any case he published at that time. One immediate aspect which is shared by all the poems we shall deal with in this section is apparent on reading this poem, and that is its obscurity. There are a variety of reasons for this obscurity but chief among them is Apollinaire's desire to fuse as many levels of meaning as possible into his images and statements. Often an examination of the manuscripts of these poems reveals that Apollinaire rejected the first image he had created for something more obscure, more capable of carrying several levels of meaning :

"On remarque aussi qu'Apollinaire, à mesure qu'il rédige son oeuvre, va parfois du réel à l'irréel, de l'image naturelle à l'image plus métaphorique et éloignée de son point de départ. A la description évidente des deux vers :

"Si les bateliers ont ramé

Loin des récifs à fleur de l'onde"
il a préféré le tableau plus mystérieux :

"Si les bateliers ont ramé

Loin des lèvres à fleur de l'onde" (1)

One also realises that the poet is constantly moving away from the real world into a world of his own ; but in this poem one misses the force that was present in the images of "L'Emigrant". There is a violence present in this poem, but it is much less effective in as much as it is merely the description of physical violence, or its results, perpetrated on the narrator of the poem :

"Le sang jaillit de mes otelles

A mon aspect et je l'avoue

Le meurtre de mon double orgueil" (2)

The various analyses of this poem (3) have shown all that Apollinaire is compressing into the character of the narrator, and have separated the sexual and spiritual levels of meaning that he was fusing together here. It is not our intention here to repeat the work that others have done in this field, and so we shall content ourselves with pointing out that what the poem has gained in complexity from this fusion it has lost in immediacy. In general what makes this poem different from "L'Emigrant" and the other poems which we shall discuss in this section is a unity of tone. It is true that the poem does contain elements of the unexpected

(1) L.C. Breunig, "Le Manuscrit de Lul de Faltenin", Revue des Sciences Humaines, Oct.-Dec. 1956, p. 403

(2) Lul de Faltenin, O.P., p. 97

(3) Breunig op. cit. and also "Le Flaneur des Deux Rives", juin 1955, the articles of Scott Bates and of René Louis.

("Loin des lèvres à fleur de l'onde"); images that are unreal ("...et le firmament s'est changé très vite en méduse"), but there is almost no variation of tone throughout the entire poem. Everything is bathed in an atmosphere of symbolic unreality which detracts from the potential of individual images.

In fact we know that this poem was first published in "La Phalange" in November of 1907, and this review was founded by Jean Royère to be the organ of the neo-symbolist movement which he had begun. We also know that Apollinaire greatly admired Royère and became greatly interested in certain of the latter's aesthetic ideas(I), in particular his ideas concerning falsehood and truth in poetry. But no group could long detain Apollinaire and only "Lul de Faltenin" and "Pipe"(2) among his poems remain to show their influence.

"Le néo-symbolisme du groupe de la Phalange le séduit mais il a trop d'originalité pour suivre longtemps un lyrisme engagé. Il cessera sa collaboration en 1909 mais la fréquentation de ce milieu de jeunes poètes l'aidera à dégager sa propre inspiration. ."(3)

We propose to pass on now to an examination of "Le Brasier" and also of "Les Fiançailles" treating these two poems together as they both grew from the same first rough draft entitled "Pyrée"(4). These poems represent the real development of Apollinaire's use of

(1) See Ch.I, sec.2

(2) O.P., p. 572

(3) cf. Adéma (68), p. 121

(4) cf. Déc., p. 176 and also Breunig "Apollinaire's "Les Fiançailles"

violence as a literary technique and we propose to study them in detail. It is first necessary to remind the reader that at this time Apollinaire's writings on art and his interest in the plastic arts in general increased greatly with certain consequences for his poetry, as we shall see.

"Le Brasier" begins with the poet's renunciation of his past. It is ritualised, described as though it were a ceremony, but the metaphorical nature of the fire, its complexity, is made clear from the start.(I)

" le noble feu

Que je transporte et que j'adore"

This is not only because the description is metaphoric but also so that the element of cruelty that is present, especially in "De vives mains" may also be ritualised. There is nothing to shock us in the first two lines, so that the pun on "feu" which is strategically placed at the end of the third line, comes as even more of a surprise to us. It introduces a slight note of flippancy, a wry humour. The next line brings together "Ce Passé" and "Ces têtes de morts" without any intermediary so that we are forced to see the past, and perhaps not only the author's, as dead and completely sterile. The past that is being destroyed is not only the poet's own immediate past but also the history of our civilisation, which is dismissed as just another skull.

The second stanza begins on a note of irreverence which catches us unawares :

"Le galop soudain des étoiles"

The ancient theme of the cosmic dance is expressed with a humour

which does not deny its validity, but which nevertheless serves to distance the reader from the remains of symbolist or neo-symbolist expression and imagery in the poem. And if the centaurs are chosen to represent the animal world here, there is no doubt a humorous element in their presence, as there is in the idea of ". . . des *grandes* plaintes végétales". This distance that is created between the reader and the terms of the poem, or this part of the poem, is not gratuitous. It serves as an indication that the means of expression that the poet is using is part of the past that he is throwing in the fire. This is emphasised by the change of verse form in part two of the poem. The poet is approaching the "autrefois/J'ai fait des poèmes selon des règles que j'ai oubliées" which is present in the manuscript "Les Paroles Etoiles"(1) and which was probably the very first draft of the ideas which were eventually to make up "Le Brasier" and also "Les Fiançailles"(2). In this respect it is worth noting that this first part of "Le Brasier" was almost certainly composed after the other parts as can be seen from the manuscripts. Hence its regular versification can be seen as a deliberate attempt on the part of the poet to express himself in a way from which he felt he had progressed. This is not just a simple distinction between "vers libre" and regular verse for clearly Apollinaire had used "vers libre" long before the composition of this poem. It is worth our observing here that the verse form that Apollinaire chose for this section of the poem is the verse form of "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé", the form in which he had achieved such heights of lyrical expression. Now the very fact that this section of the poem was

(1) cf. Déc. p. 204

(2) cf. Déc. pp. 173-177 and pp. 201-208; also Durrty t.3 pp. 162-168.

composed after the other two sections leads us to think that the poet intended the change from regular to free verse should be seen as significant.

It seems to us that there is a parallel to be drawn here between Apollinaire's use of language in a way that betrays his awareness that he is using it as a tool and his heightened awareness of the role of the artist as a creator who chooses to work in a certain medium, which arose from his increasing activities as an art critic.

"Pour le peintre, pour le poète, pour les artistes (c'est ce qui les différencie des autres hommes, et surtout des savants), chaque oeuvre devient un univers nouveau avec ses lois particulières." (1) And this was a conception of the approach to a work of art or literature that Apollinaire held constantly during this period of great change in his poetry, for he wrote and published it in 1908 and again in his book "Les Peintres Cubistes" in 1911.

"Matisse est un des rares artistes qui se soient complètement dégagés de l'impressionisme. Il s'efforce non pas d'imiter la nature mais d'exprimer ce qu'il voit et ce qu'il sent par la matière même du tableau, ainsi qu'un poète se sert des mots du dictionnaire pour exprimer la même nature et les mêmes sentiments." (2)

This awareness is definitely meant to be awakened in the reader also, and it becomes increasingly clear when one examines "Les Fiançailles", where the same effect is achieved by slightly different means.

(1) Chroniques d'Art 1902-1918 (Ed. Breunig) pp. 60-61 (article on Braque)

(2) Chroniques d'Art 1902-1918 (Ed. Breunig) p. 74 (article on Matisse)

Returning to the text, in stanza four the poet springs upon the reader a series of images destined to create an unreal; or perhaps surreal, world ; flames grow like flowers, hearts hang from lemon trees and the stars which have bled are assimilated to the bodiless heads of women. The tone of this stanza is very different from the tone of the three preceding stanzas. Where the first three stanzas deal in metaphor which while different from our normal conception of the world can co-exist with it, the fourth stanza is a systematic destruction of reality as we know it, and quite definitely supersedes this reality by the force of the images. In the first line the order of the words allows the reader's imagination to form a picture of flowers growing on a plain before replacing the flowers by flames ; by delaying the key word in the image to the end Apollinaire first calls to mind a picture of the reality which he wishes to destroy. This procedure is not repeated in the second line, but whereas it was necessary to reinforce the metamorphosis of flower to flame, this is not so of the Bosch-like quality of the image that is presented to us here. There is a certain echo of "Palais" in the third line ("Pendez vos têtes aux pères"), in this image which we cannot feel as cruel but which nevertheless violates all our concepts of reality. What is here being cast into the fire are the past loves of the poet, which have remained as his inspiration even after the physical absence of the women whom he wooed ; hence perhaps the fact that the heads are present while the bodies are not, although the image of the bodiless head and its identification with some stellar body recurs again and again in Apollinaire's poetry with many different functions.

The final stanza has a magic quality which is an admirable climax to the section. Its mystery cannot be entirely penetrated,

but it seems to operate an identification between the poet's former self (the shift of the pronoun from "je" to "tu" is what separates past from present here) and the world as seen from the solar heights to which the poet, his present self that is, has now ascended in his identification with the fire which is consuming his past and which is at the same time the sun under which the poet's soul is exposed naked :

"Mon âme au soleil se dévêt"

Perhaps in the last two lines of the stanza the poet is seeing his former self illuminated by the rays of his sun-self from different angles in the way that the sun's rays striking rocks from different angles can seem to make them move. In any case the imagery in this stanza depends for its efficacy and for its mystery on the unreality, the other-worldly quality which stems from the poet's discovery that by the use of language he may create a river which is 'pinned' to a town. To the reader there is no association between the words "fleuve" and "épingle" but the poet has used the grammatical possibility of their association to create his image, (the force of "épingle" is reinforced by the use of "fixe" in the following line which continues the image). The maintained existence of the world, surreal or unreal, of the poem depends upon this continuation of the violation of the reader's concepts of reality. It is a question of energy, if we may be permitted the analogy ; the poet's language must destroy the real world at the same time as he creates the unreal one, and he is thus committed to a process of continuous creation, a dialectic concept of the poet's role.

On this subject, Breunig has much to say of interest :

"Apollinaire's biographers have amply described his spiritual crisis of 1907-1908. Suffice it to say here that he was attempting like

Picasso and Braque to evolve a new means of expression best summed up by the term "simultaneity", a word which did not gain common currency until around 1912. His dedication of "Les Fiançailles" to Picasso suggests that he was actually trying to adapt Cubist techniques to poetry. Efforts to substantiate this hypothesis have proved quite futile, but there is no doubt about the similarity of the goals. Apollinaire, like the two founders of Cubism, was, in the broadest sense, groping to reconcile multiplicity and unity in such a way that both would remain. It is fascinating to observe in his prose writings of 1908 a tendency to think more and more in dialectical terms, constantly fusing antithetical concepts in neat paradoxes which would allow a quality to become its opposite without losing its identity : truth in the lie, clarity in obscurity, humanity within inhumanity, restraint within audacity, etc.

"This mode of thought harmonized perfectly with Apollinaire's own character. His greatest fault was his inability to make up his mind, but from youth this indecisiveness, far from leading to apathy, produced an ebullient thirst for ubiquity. Why couldn't he be in all places at one time or in all times at one place? It was not until 1908, however, that he seems to have had the revelation that as a poet he did not have to choose, that, instead, he could fuse. And "Les Fiançailles", I believe, is the dramatic expression of that revelation." (1)

If we have quoted at some length from L.C. Breunig's article on "Les Fiançailles" it is because we have several points to make in relation to it, and because as we have already pointed out it is not possible to treat these two poems, "Le Brasier" and "Les Fianç-

(1) Breunig, "Apollinaire's Les Fiançailles" pp. 2-3

ailles" , separately. Firstly, it seems to us that the statements which we have made about Apollinaire's use of language in "Le Brasier" and which are also relevant to "Les Fiançailles", illustrate one way in which Apollinaire was approximating the Cubist researches for a more conceptual approach to painting, bearing in mind that Apollinaire never ceased to emphasize the difference between the two media. Where the Cubists fragmented an object into a series of independent planes, Apollinaire fragmented language into levels of meaning and effect ; and where the independent planes in a cubist portrait such as Picasso's "Nu à la Draperie" which he painted in 1907 still combine to make up the object of which they are part, so Apollinaire's images retain a composite identity. But the parallel must not be pressed too far; Apollinaire was not a cubist poet. The similarity which exists is rather one of intention of the artist, than one of the finished works ; and in as much as the means which Apollinaire used to achieve his ends were images of violence as we have defined them (in as much as they impose upon the reader a reality which is not the reality of his own perceptions and in as much as this is often achieved by the subversion of the normal functions of language, or indeed the destructions of these functions as when two words are simply placed together and inter-react by virtue of their juxtaposition) so Apollinaire's technique cannot be regarded as an imitation of the cubists' techniques for we have shown that elements of it are present even in his earliest poetry and that it corresponded to something basic in his character and mode of expression.

Secondly, if Apollinaire was creating a fusion in his poetry, of past and present, here and there, it was a limited one for it was in fact a continuous recreation of himself, as there was a

continuous creation of the poetic universe, and this depended upon a continuous destruction of his past self, in as far as that self is seen as an object. It is significant that this motif continues in his poetry right up to his death and is paralleled by the claim as in "Les Collines", that maturity has succeeded lost youth :

"Au-dessus de Paris un jour

Combattait deux grands avions

L'un était rouge et l'autre noir

Tandis qu'au zénith flamboyait

L'éternel avion solaire

L'un était toute ma jeunesse

Et l'autre c'était l'avenir"

+ + + +

"Où donc est tombée ma jeunesse"

Thirdly, to re-iterate a point which is developed at greater length in chapter one, this reconciling of opposing characteristics within one image or expression is a basic part of what Apollinaire saw as the essentially creative function of the poet; he was much later to write to Madeleine Pagès :

"La poésie est (même étymologiquement) la création." (1)
and in a poem a month after the above letter :

"Et le poète est cet observateur de la vie et il invente les lueurs innombrables des mystères qu'il fait repérer." (2)

Two or three months previous to the above quotations, in a long letter, he spoke of his poetic achievements to his new fiancée :

(1) Tendre comme le souvenir, (Letter of 11th August 1915)

(2) Ibid. 10th Sept. 1915

"Je vous ai dit que 'Vendémiaire' était mon poème préféré d'Alcools. J'y songe, le plus nouveau et le plus lyrique, le plus profond ce sont ces "Fiançailles" dédiées à Picasso dont j'admire l'art sublime (. . .) et nul doute qu'avec "Le Brasier" il ne soit mon meilleur poème sinon le plus immédiatement accessible." (1)

This last quotation reveals not only that Apollinaire still thought highly of "Les Fiançailles" several years later, but also that he must have regarded them as having achieved just that state of poetic creation which he saw as the essential quality of poetry. Clearly what Apollinaire was attempting to achieve in these poems was very dear to him and was still relevant to his ideas on poetry some eight years later in his career. We propose at this point to pass on to an examination of some parts of "Les Fiançailles" to underline what we have said about the first section of "Le Brasier" and to substantiate our claim that these remarks are also relevant to "Les Fiançailles". This done we shall return to the remaining sections of "Le Brasier".

The whole of the first section of "Les Fiançailles" is taken from a poem which Apollinaire probably wrote in 1902, "Le Printemps". There are only one or two minor modifications to this passage as it appears in "Les Fiançailles" and the most important of these is the elimination of the fourth line of the first stanza which identified the mysterious "oiseau bleu" of line three as the "Prince charmant du conte et de tendre aventure" (2)..It is also worth noting the change in the third stanza where the third line in the original is - "Tout l'horizon palpète ainsi que leurs paupières". This becomes in

(1) Tendre comme le Souvenir, (Letter of 30th July 1915 (p. 74))

(2) O.P., p. 556

the version used in "Les Fiançailles" - "Les villages lointains sont comme leurs paupières" - another example of Apollinaire moving from the obvious to the mysterious as he reworked his poems. Thus at the beginning of the poem we are confronted with a description, in regular verse form with the exception of the missing last line from the first stanza, of a tender pastoral love scene in which certain mysterious elements serve to lend an air of strangeness. We are also left to wonder why the fiancés are described as "parjures".

The next section creates an abrupt break ; a complete change of tone, rhythm and content. An examination of the early manuscript versions of the poem (I) reveals that the first section of the final version was not present at all in any of the drafts of the poem. So then, we can see that Apollinaire intended this section to play a role similar to that of the initial section of "Le Brasier", and this is amply borne out in the fourth section of the final version :

"J'ai eu le courage de regarder en arrière
 Les cadavres de mes jours
 Marquent ma route et je les pleure
 Les uns pourrissent dans les églises italiennes
 Ou bien dans de petits bois de citronniers" (2)

The poet is underlining for us the role that the first section has been called on to play ; it is a part of his past. If it is not fully obvious to the reader that this section is an extract from a previous poem, it is at least obvious that it is written in a

(I) cf. Déc., pp. 204-208

(2) O.P., p. 130

style which predates that of the rest of the poem. It is true that this may not even emerge fully from the contrast between the first section and the second and subsequent sections, but there can no longer be any doubt after the above quotation, especially as it is followed by the section beginning :

"Pardonnez-moi mon ignorance

Pardonnez-moi de ne plus connaître l'ancien jeu des vers"

L.C. Breunig has said in his analysis of the poem :

"The unwary reader has no way of knowing, for example, that large segments of the work are taken from older unpublished poems, whereas in Apollinaire's own mind their presence was, I believe, of major importance."

We would agree that the presence of these segments is of major importance in the poem and also that the role which they were playing in Apollinaire's mind is much clearer than it is to the reader ; but we cannot agree that the reader has no way of knowing that the first section in particular has the special significance of standing for Apollinaire's past. Breunig goes on to say :

"In a poem the very subject of which was the change from an old style to a new what could be more appropriate than the insertion of earlier pieces in a new context". (1)

Again we agree, but again also we insist that this is in some measure communicated to the reader. Let us compare the integration of another stanza from "Le Printemps" into "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" (2) with the use of previously composed sections in "Les Fiançailles" and we shall immediately see that it was Apollinaire's

(1) Both quotations from Breunig "Apollinaire's Les Fiançailles" p.3

(2) cf. section three, pp. 78-79

intention that these sections should be seen to be what they are.

This stanza, the final one in the poem and therefore the more important for its position, is completely integrated into the poem and the reader has no way of knowing that it is taken from another poem, indeed he is not intended to know.

"Gonfle-toi vers la nuit O Mer Les yeux des squales

Jusqu'à l'aube ont guetté de loin avidement

Des cadavres de jours rongés par les étoiles

Parmi le bruit des flots et les derniers serments" (1)

At the most elementary level, the verse form of this stanza is the same as that of most of the rest of the poem. Moreover its imagery is in harmony with the imagery of the rest of the poem (the emigrant is already at sea, his past has already been seen as "journées veuves" and "années. . . enchaînées") and what is more the tone of the stanza is entirely fitting to the climax of the poem.

On the other hand the section from "Les Fiançailles", coming as it does at the beginning of the poem, introduces not only a mood and an atmosphere but also images of a much more traditional type than are to be found in the rest of the poem, particularly such images as :

"Et les roses de l'électricité s'ouvrent encore

Dans le jardin de ma mémoire" (2)

Thus while it may be fair for Breunig to say that the extracts from previous poems that are present in "Les Fiançailles" are of greater significance to Apollinaire than to the reader, for after

(1) O.P., p. 106

(2) O.P., p. 131

all Apollinaire was aware of their exact context in the poems from which they had been taken, and probably also his feelings and ideas at the time when he wrote these poems, it is not true that the reader is unable to see that the initial section at least is included as an example of Apollinaire's early style, and that consequently, the rest of the poem is in some measure a comment upon it.

We may also see as evidence in support of this the fact that Apollinaire changed the order of the fragments in the manuscript "Les Paroles Etoiles" (I) so that the section which was formerly the fourth in the final version comes after the first and now begins :

"Mes amis m'ont enfin avoué leur mépris
 Je buvais à pleins verres les étoiles
 Un ange a exterminé pendant que je dormais
 Les agneaux les pasteurs des tristes bergeries
 De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre" (2)

The first line of this section may quite fairly be seen as reflecting back on the previous section so that the poet is saying, "If this is the kind of poetry I write then my friends are right to admit their scorn." And reading the first line in relation to the rest of this section - my friends admitted their scorn because "Je buvais etc. . .". The poet's approval of his friends' action is easily discerned in the following lines :

"Un ange a exterminé pendant que je dormais
 Les agneaux les pasteurs des tristes bergeries"

(1) cf. Déc., pp. 204-205

(2) O.P., p. 129

What the poet is saying here, not without a wry humour, is that the world changed and the pastoral/symbolist images of the next line were no longer appropriate to the condition of modern man, but he was not aware of this change and continued to write in these terms. But the lambs and shepherds also combine with the next line -

"De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre"

-- to present a tableau in which the birth and death of a Christ figure are laid before the reader. There is however a note that jars in this image, the centurions are described as false. If the persecutors are false, then it follows that the martyrdom is also false; i.e. in attempting to convey spiritual truth through the perfection of his poetry (the symbolist concept of the role of the poet) the poet-Christ is martyred, but because these truths and images are no longer relevant to the modern world, the martyrdom is not of any value, no salvation is achieved by it.

This interpretation becomes even more obvious when the original version of this section is examined :

"Mes amis, ne craignez pas de m'avouer votre mépris

J'ai l'orgueil de me souvenir de mes souhaits glorieux

(J'ai rêvé) de poèmes si grandioses que j'ai dû les laisser inachevés

Moi-même j'ai tenté de rythmer

Parce que mon souci de perfection

Dépassait mon goût même et les forces d'un seul homme

(Puis j'ai reconnu que chaque moment porte en soi sa propre perfection)

Mais j'ai eu cette force ce goût et cette science

Et je me suis endormi

Un ange a exterminé pendant mon sommeil

Les agneaux, les pasteurs des tristes bergeries.

De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre
 Les yeux mal-blessés par l'épurgé dansaient
 Puis après la fuite et la mort de mes vérités poétiques
 Je m'éveillai au bout de cinq ans" (1)

It is clear that the scorn of his friends is levelled at the kind of poetry that Apollinaire used to write (one may even see in the lines "Mais j'ai eu . . . bergeries" a direct reference to the poem "Le Larron", given recent interpretations of this poem such as that of Scott Bates, (2) because it is no longer relevant to the modern world. But whereas in the original version this section follows the section beginning "Pardonnez-moi mon ignorance. . .", in the final version it follows an example of this very kind of poetry, complete with religious symbolism in the second stanza. And here, perhaps we see the reason for the suppression of the fourth line of the first verse -

"Prince charmant du conte et de tendre aventure"

- for if Apollinaire had admitted that this section was only a fairy tale, a playful fantasy, as is abundantly clear in the original from this line and the third last verse, he would have been deprived of the ability to make the blue bird stand as a rather precious and mysterious symbol, which the rest of the poem would show to be irrelevant to the modern world.

Finally, by saying -

"Etoiles de l'éveil je n'en connais aucune"

- the poet is obviously admitting that the stars which he had been

(1) cf. Déc., p. 205

(2) cf. Scott Bates, "The identity of Apollinaire's Le Larron", in French Review, October 1966.

drinking (line 2) are the poetic truths which belong to the world of the poetry of spiritual quests and this in the "Paroles Etoiles" version is beyond any doubt identified to the poetry he had been writing up to this time :

"Puis après la fuite et la mort de mes vérités poétiques
Je m'éveillai au bout de cinq ans"

Thus, after this somewhat lengthy development we think it quite clearly demonstrated that the initial sections of "Le Brasier" and "Les Fiançailles" have the same role to play, namely, to stand as examples of the kind of poetry that Apollinaire is renouncing in these two poems. If we have gone to such lengths to develop this point, it is because we wish to show now that the other sections of both poems exploit on a large scale the techniques of violence, and that the insertion of these sections into the two poems in itself conforms to those techniques.

Let us now return to the remaining sections of "Le Brasier". The only thing that links the second section to the first is the continuation of the imagery of fire. There is a discontinuity between the lines that is not smoothed over as it is in the first section by the regularity of the rhythm and verse form. The poet here is undergoing martyrdom, not a false martyrdom like that already discussed in "Les Fiançailles", but a real one. The destruction of his past is carried right up to the present moment so that, in this auto da fe, the poet is undergoing a continuous process of self-regeneration, by being the fire which consumes his own past. Thus he is able to say -

"Je suffis pour l'éternité à entretenir le feu de mes délices"(1)

(1) O.P., p. 109, and all other quotations from this poem.

Through his martyrdom the poet achieves new life, and assumes the powers of creativity and prophecy that he makes so central to his great poem "Les Collines". On the whole this section serves as a transition from section one to the final section in which the techniques of violence come into their own.

Having separated himself from the rest of mankind the poet, in the third and final section of the poem, will exploit images of surprise and mystery in order to maintain the role of one who is initiated into the secrets of the universe. The section opens with a vision of the sun crossing the sky, but a sun which, because of its associations with light and flame, is the future, hidden from man but open to the poet's gaze, because of the martyrdom which he has suffered and is suffering, should he dare to lift his eyes to see. These three opening lines follow logically in both tone and content from the preceding section ; but the fourth line comes as a complete surprise, where the reader might expect the poet to draw back the curtain and reveal the future, he finds :

"Nous attendons ton bon plaisir ô mon amie" (I)

There is no clue as to the identity of the "amie", she has not previously entered into the poem, and, indeed, in the third stanza of the first section the poet seemed to have renounced love and women as a source of inspiration for his poetry :

"L'amour est devenu mauvais"

Nor is there any further reference to this mysterious woman in the remainder of the section. One may suggest various meanings for the line, but none can be ascribed to it with any degree of certainty, nor do we think that the poet intended this line to be

understood in the normal sense of the word. (Of course, those with a detailed knowledge of the life of the poet are entitled to see in this line a reference to Marie Laurencin whose meeting with the poet in 1907 did much to help him out of the period of crisis which he had undergone, but this is purely marginal to the poem.) The function of this line is surely to upset the reader's expectations, to do violence to his ideas of what the evolution of the poem ought to be. If we look at the visual presentation of the poem on the page, and this is something that is important in Apollinaire's poetry before he began composing calligrammes, we can see that the first three lines of this section represent one movement, that the fourth line breaks abruptly from this and stands in isolation, as do the fifth and sixth lines, while lines seven to eleven are put together in the form of a verse. These three isolated lines are all there to do one thing principally and that is to interrupt the flow of the poem, to surprise the reader, to act rapidly on him, which is why they are each only one line images ; there is no time for any development.

"J'ose à peine regarder la divine mascarade"

This line introduces a note of fear which has hitherto been absent from the poet's confident acceptance of his martyrdom and the destruction of the past. It is suddenly made clear to the reader that the poet's entrance to the world of esoteric knowledge is a difficult and dangerous one, that he who dares to look upon the gods risks being blinded. Perhaps now, in retrospect we may see in the preceding line a plea for support from the poet to his "amie".

"Quand bleuira sur l'horizon la Désirade" (I)

(I) cf. "La Chanson" O.P., p.54 - "Mon île au loin ma Désirade" - once again the presence of the woman as a haven of security.

With this line the reader is confronted with a "cri de coeur", the poet's longing for the promised land. Again we are surprised, for the tone of the poem, the praise of fire and its virtues of purification have led us to believe that the poet has joyfully accepted his fate, that he has raised himself to the level of the Gods.

Thus with three quick thrusts the poet has completely disorientated his readers and although these three lines may be seen to have some other function i.e. the expression of the poet's feelings in his situation, it must be clear that their principal function is to take the reader aback, to surprise him rather than to convey information to him. Having done this the poet now begins to translate his Promethean experiences :

"Au-delà de notre atmosphère s'élève un théâtre

Que construisit le ver Zamir sans instrument"

We know from an article that Apollinaire wrote about his friend André Salmon, what the "ver Zamir" meant for him -

"Le ver Zamir qui sans outils pouvait bâtir le temple de Jérusalem, quelle saisissante image du poète." ((1)

- and Madame Durry has elucidated the sources of this image in an article (2), therefore we do not propose to duplicate her work here; but, in any case, if the precise nature of the "ver Zamir" remains obscure to the reader of the poem, there can be no doubt of the efficacy of the image as an illustration of the powers of creativity in a non-physical sense, and hence by extension of the creative powers of the imagination. It is not, then, the exotic element that is introduced by naming the "ver Zamir" that interests

(1) O.C. t.3 p.822 (article in Vers et Prose, juin-août 1908)

(2) La Table Ronde, avril 1955 no. 88, pp. 138-141

us specifically here, although this has its role to play in the surprise that the reader feels on being confronted by this image; but rather the unreal aspect of the image.

"Au-delà de notre atmosphère . . ."

- these first words seem to transport us back to the "hauteurs où pense la lumière", to the spiritual world of the opening of this section of the poem; but the following - "s'élève un théâtre" - strains the imagination, forces it into a mental picture of some kind of theatre suspended in a void (an image which is more readily conceivable to us in this second half of the twentieth century). Then the next line destroys all remaining connections with reality and the image leaves the visual plane to remain in the mind of the reader as a sensation, as a presence of something created rather than as a picture which can be related to something we know. The image is a demonstration of the creative power of the poet and of the unreal aspect of his creations; later the poet will call them "surnaturel" and later still "surréal". The evolution of his theories had already reached the definition of "surnaturalisme" before he began to use the word itself, as is made clear in chapter one, section one, and as is also apparent from the following quotation contemporary with the composition of "Les Fiançailles" :

"Le poète est analogue à la divinité. Il sait que dans sa création la vérité est indéfectible. Il admire son ouvrage. Il connaît l'erreur qui anime sa créature, fausse au regard de nos visions mais qui présente aux puissances momentanées une vérité éternelle. Aussi l'organisme d'une créature poétique ne contient-il pas moins de perfection que celui d'une de celles qui tombent sous nos sens. Et bien que le poète soit agité au hasard, la fatalité domine sa créature.

Chaque jour une volonté toute puissante change l'ordre des choses, contrarie les causes et les effets et anéantit le souvenir et la vérité même de ce qui existait la veille pour créer une succession d'événements établissant une nouvelle vérité. Tel est l'ouvrage poétique : la fausseté d'une réalité anéantie. Et le souvenir même a disparu. La comparaison est impossible. La vie et la vérité sont indéniables." (I)

Thus Apollinaire defines in prose the complex nature of poetic truth as he tries to express it in the form of poetry in "Le Brasier".

This fantastic image of the "ver Zamir" is followed by three lines which return us to the apparent world of our own perceptions, the intention of the poet being to make us feel the separation of the world of the poem, his world and ours :

"Puis le soleil revint ensoleiller les places

D'une ville marine apparue contremont

Sur les toits se reposaient les colombes lasses"

A peaceful picture of the ordinary world where the sunlight is not the terrible burning, purifying light that the poet endures but the gentle illumination of the landscape. This image surprises us by its very lack of force, by the power of understatement almost. Perhaps also, in situating his town by the sea the poet intends to express the distance which lies between the "paquebot et ma vie renouvelée" and the town from which nonetheless these new phenomena are just visible but not comprehensible as the sun is visible to, yet far beyond the reach of, the tired doves resting on the rooftops of the town. The poet's metaphorical flight carries him

(I) La Phalange, août 1908, O.C.t3,p.798

well above the physical flight of the doves. Having momentarily returned us to the world familiar to us, the poet immediately whisks us away again :

"Et le troupeau de sphinx regagne la sphingerie" (I)

Here not content with surprising us by the introduction of the sphinxes, the poet also refuses to allow our idea of the sphinx to influence the image, for he presents them as a herd or flock returning to the fold, under the care of the herdsman, and in so doing he achieves a note of humour in an image which in its multiple appearances in European literature has not been at all connected with anything except the tragic and the dramatic. That is not to say that the poet destroys the classical associations of the image, rather he achieves a fusion of these elements which is astonishing to us. Little wonder that in the near future the poet was to take as his device "J'émervaille!" As to the meaning of the image, it is the essential characteristic of the sphinx to be an enigma which perishes when the solution is found (perhaps the poet is offering us an auto-destructive image!) and perhaps the poet is the herdsman who parades them before us but who also shepherds them back to the fold. That is to say that the sphinxes are most probably symbolic of the mystery and also the violence of the poet's images.

The next two lines present us with a picture of the continuous flux of creation and destruction of the universe that is unexpected in a man who died before these theories of the universe became fashionable in our century. The impossible theatre (according to the laws of the universe as we know them) is composed of "le

(I) cf. "L'Enchanteur pourrissant"

feu solide" - even the material is beyond the grasp of the imagination as the stars are beyond our physical reach.

The passage which follows exposes the limitations of the poet and of his bid for knowledge of the "divine masquerade". We are reminded that the martyr's pyre, to which there has been no direct reference in this section, consumes, and that the poet is accomplishing an act of self-immolation. The poet's flight, as we saw in comparison to that of the birds, is metaphorical; he has reached the regions "où pense la lumière" while sitting in his seat :

" Et voici le spectacle

Et pour toujours je suis assis dans un fauteuil

Ma tête mes genoux mes coudes vain pentacle

Les flammes ont poussé sur moi comme des feuilles"

The poet, immobile in body, has soared to the heavens in spirit, but this cannot be done with impunity. The magic figure of the pentacle, in which the enchanter may conjure up presences that are not of this world, is in vain formed by the poet. He is consumed by his own imagination - "Les flammes ont poussé sur moi comme des feuilles". Thus in achieving his vision of the future the poet destroys himself, he has gone beyond the limit of his powers.

"Des acteurs inhumains claires bêtes nouvelles

Donnent des ordres aux hommes apprivoisés"

Who are these strange creatures to whom the future belongs? Might we not see here the release of the powers of man's subconscious mind, which for the moment the poet fears, which for the moment he sees as monsters of the id? The image remains mysterious, of another world, but if we compare it with this image from "Les

Collines" -

"Profondeurs de la conscience
On vous explorera demain
Et qui sait quels êtres vivants
Seront tirés de ces abîmes
Avec des univers entiers" (1)

- might we not conclude that Apollinaire is talking about the same thing, but that whereas in "Le Brasier" he feels the power of his imagination failing, and his confidence in his ability to sustain his new vision of the world weakens, in "Les Collines" he can say :

" voici le temps
Où l'on connaîtra l'avenir
Sans mourir de sa connaissance" (2)

So that if "Le Brasier" ends with an image of death in the pursuit of this knowledge this is not the final word that the poet has to say upon the subject, but rather that having come so far he feels unable to continue. But the phoenix will rise from the ashes. This final section is in some ways a declaration of the setting at liberty of the imagination. This is visible not only in the content and imagery of the poem but also in the jumps from one passage to another that the reader's imagination is forced to make. There is already something of the character of automatic writing in this section of the poem, although the manuscripts leave no doubt that this effect is a deliberate one and not the effect of hasard and free association. Nevertheless the final section of this poem is clearly a "succession d'événements établissant une

(1) O.P., p. 172

(2) O.P., p. 174

nouvelle vérité" and in order for it to be this the poet must in his own words - "(anéantir) le souvenir et la vérité même de ce qui existait la veille"; and it is here that we have shown that the violence of his imagery is central to the poem's aspirations. Without this violence the unreal, or surreal, world of the poem would be caught in the net of the reader's conscious perceptions of reality, and would look, as does any fish out of water, absurd. The power of the images, the power of the poem as a whole is the persuasive power of violence, and this is also true of "Les Fiançailles" by considering the appearance of the poem in the volume. It consists of nine separate sections each of which is printed on a separate page, although this space is by no means necessitated by the length of the sections. Therefore, although in the final version of the poem the sections are not numbered, it is clear that the poet intended each section of the poem to stand as an independent and complete whole first of all and then as a part of the poem in relation to the whole poem and to the other parts. This is an important consideration, for as we have already seen the relationship of the first section to the second has a very important role to play in the meaning of the poem. Clearly, if the poet had not allowed the reader to assimilate the first section on its own, then the effect of contradiction obtained from the second section would have been considerably attenuated, and the poem as a whole would have lost in tension and in energy.

This contradiction which the poet establishes between sections of the poem is carried over into the sections themselves often so that one line contradicts or modifies another, but always the author allows each line, or group of lines, its own integrity before introducing the element calculated to change the reader's

attitude to what he has just read. We shall examine this proposition in detail to show that the poem depends for its success on this violence, for no element of the poem destroys any other completely, therefore the conflict is renewed each time we turn to the poem.

As we have already examined section one in some detail let us now begin with section two. (Section one being, as we have said, the introductory section in which one is faced with the enigmatic description of the fiancés as "parjures", and in which the poet deliberately increases the mystic and mysterious note of his rather precious verses.) In the first nine lines of the section there is absolutely no carry-over from one line to the other ; each line is heavily end-stopped (except line three) and each line changes in imagery from the previous one even if one can establish a connection between lines three, four and five :

"Un ange a exterminé pendant que je dormais
 Les agneaux les pasteurs des tristes bergeries
 De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre"

This broken rhythm, this disconnected imagery has a very definite effect on the reader's sensibility ; a calculated effect : that of depriving him of any hold on the poem and instead establishing the poem's hold over him. Line two does not follow from line one nor line three from line two etc. but this does not mean there is no relationship between them. The very fact of their physical proximity establishes this relationship just as the relationship of one section of the poem to another is established by the physical proximity of these sections within the poem as a whole. Clearly there is a connection between these two things and just as clearly this is what must be understood by the term juxtaposition when it

is applied as it has been by almost all critics to the poetry of Apollinaire.

Thus while one is surprised to find the line -

"Je buvais à pleinsverre les étoiles"

- coming after the first line, one nevertheless has to establish a relationship between them, and the surprise one feels is increased when one discovers that the most readily understood relationship between these lines is a causal one. By simply juxtaposing these two lines, Apollinaire has, as it were, been able to insert an unwritten because in between them. But by not writing this because he has at the same time left the relationship of the lines much more open, and so given each line a kind of liberty and autonomy which increases the surprise that the reader feels on reading them. As we have said, because the two lines are juxtaposed, the reader quite readily establishes a relationship between them, but the poet has no intention of allowing this to happen too easily, as this would simply replace the old imposition of a meaning by the poet on the lines by a new imposition of meaning by the reader, which would immediately destroy the liberty with which he has endowed his lines. So Apollinaire reinforces the break between the lines by the break between images. Where one image does not follow from another, but rather contrasts and conflicts with it, the reader is forced to accept the autonomy of each before any relationship can be established between them.

Thus in the lines -

"Etoiles de l'éveil je n'en connais aucune

Les becs de gaz pissaient leur flamme au clair de lune"

- by mentioning the "Etoiles de l'éveil" the poet first calls to mind a picture of the morning stars, before denying it, and then

because these two lines are linked by rhyme, the gas-lights become the poet's morning stars, and his awakening is to the ugliness of the city which is described in the following lines. This is even clearer in the manuscript *Les Paroles Etoiles* (1) :

"Je m'éveillai au bout de cinq ans (et suivit) une nuit
/citadine

Les becs de gaz pissaient leur flamme au clair de lune"
But here the conflict of the "Etoiles de l'éveil" and the gas-lights is lacking, and the manuscript draft is unquestionably weaker.

The imagery of the first section, of the poetry of the poet's sleep, is in sharp contrast with the imagery that follows his awakening :

"Des croque-morts avec des bocks tintaient des glas
A la carte des bougies tombaient vaille que vaille
Des faux cols sur des flots de jupes mal brossées
Des accouchées masquées fêtaient leurs relevailles"

This contrast is made more poignant and meaningful when one is aware that these lines are also taken from an early poem, "Les Villes sont pleines", (2) which Apollinaire probably wrote about a year after "Le Printemps", from which the first section is taken. In this case we think that L.C. Breunig is justified in saying that the reader cannot be aware of the extra significance this would have for Apollinaire (3), but nonetheless he can be fully aware of the contrast between this kind of imagery and the imagery

(1) cf. *Déc.*, pp. 204-5

(2) O.P., p. 563

(3) cf. Breunig, "Apollinaire's *Les Fiançailles*" p.3

of the first section, and indeed of the first part of this section. And the establishment of this conflict is clearly the poet's intention.

The ugliness of the city is here not limited to an expression of the quality of the environment, but is carried into the inhabitants of the city as well, hence the morbid note arising from the introduction of the undertakers and the presence of the prostitutes, although this latter revelation of the face of love is not as heavily insisted upon as it is in "Les Villes sont pleines". The opposition of "Les ombres qui passaient" to the fiancés of the first section is clear. This is not, however, the only way in which these lines are intended to act upon the reader; Apollinaire still intends to astonish us and to keep an element of mystery. This he does by changing his original versions of the fourth and second last lines of this section so that from being -

"La ville aux feux de nuits semblait un archipel"
and - "Mais à mes yeux de mâle horreur je me rappelle"

- they become -

"La ville cette nuit semblait un archipel"
and - "Et sombre sombre fleuve je me rappelle"

In the first case he has removed the middle term which explains the bringing together of a town and an archipelago, so that the resulting image loses its visual aspect to become a metaphor of the isolation of the individual within the group, but at the same time it acquires an element of surprise and mystery which increase its suggestive powers. In the second case the banal "Mais à mes yeux de mâle horreur" is replaced by the mysterious "Et sombre sombre fleuve" which seems to combine the darkness of the night with the image of the islands in the sea which divides them from

each other. Yet so unexpected is the introduction of the dark river that its effect is multiplied by its strangeness and mystery.

Thus the second section seems to contain the kind of poetry which is to be preferred to the example given in section one, both by the poet's friends and the poet himself now that he has awakened and is aware of the angel's passage. If we say seems it is because this indeed is the impression that the reader takes from this passage, but the poem does not end there.

It is, then, all the more surprising that the third section should begin with an affirmation of the poet's inability to express himself. Having seemingly achieved the kind of expression which would seem appropriate to the modern poet, the inhabitant of the city, the poet goes on to say :

"Je n'ai plus même pitié de moi

Et ne puis exprimer mon tourment de silence"

So, in retrospect the latter part of the second section can also be seen as just another kind of poetry which is irrelevant to the poet's situation, especially as the imagery seems to be a rejection of women as a source of inspiration - "Les ombres qui passaient n'étaient jamais jolies". Because of this tension, this contradiction which arises between one section and the next, we feel it necessary to reserve our agreement on Breunig's statements concerning the passages inserted from previous poems. For again, if the origins of this passage (lines 9-18) are not exposed to the reader, he is nevertheless capable of seeing that they serve as an example of an outmoded style.

This is all the more obvious as the first line of section three would seem to correspond to the first line of section two, and so should be seen as an admission by the poet that his friends

are right to mock him. And if the poet is still caught in a "tourment de silence", then whatever the contrast between what he has written in the first section and what he has written in the second section, the latter is no more relevant to him now than is the former, hence, no doubt, the fact that Apollinaire chose his extracts from poems which are roughly contemporary.

The metamorphosis of the next line, which deprives the poet of his ability to express himself, is a mysterious one and one which eludes any direct explanation. However, linguistic studies of symbolist poetry reveal the word "étoile" to be, by frequency of its appearances, one of the key words of symbolism. And in P. Giraud's index to the vocabulary of "Alcools"(1), we find that it ranks third among the key words of "Alcools". Yet it is only very infrequently to be found in the poems composed after "Les Fiançailles".(2) In this light it does not seem outrageous to suggest that Apollinaire was aware of the heavy burden the word is made to bear in symbolist poetry and that here he is using the word as an example of a word that has been worn out by overuse and

(1) cf. P. Giraud "Index du vocabulaire du symbolisme - I"
Paris, (Klingsieck) 1953.

(2) In fact, of all the poems included in "Alcools" and composed after "Les Fiançailles" the only times the word "étoile" appears are in the following line from "Zone" in which it has almost a note of description about it -

"Ils ont foi dans leur étoile comme les rois-mages"
- (the "Ils" in question being the poor emigrants in the Gare Saint-Lazare) and also in "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon".

by association with poetic aims which he now rejects. Certainly this would be consistent with his use of the word in line two of the preceding section. But this would be rather beyond the comprehension of his readers and so he cannot have meant this to be the only function of his metamorphosis. What he is saying, is then, perhaps explicable in the light of the following lines :

"Tous les mots que j'avais à dire se sont changés en étoiles

Un Icारे tente de s'élever jusqu'à chacun de mes yeux

Et porteur de soleils je brûle au centre de deux nébuleuses"

These lines can be interpreted in the sense that the poet's words have changed to stars and so become something that is beyond the reach of humanity, as he himself now is as the bearer of fire which will destroy anyone who approaches him and is destroying him at the same time.

The very scale of the imagery here is surprising to us after the meanness of the city streets, and the feeble vulgarity of their illumination. Here we are seeking the poet consumed by the fire of "Le Brasier". After this description the poet seems to say that his powers have deserted him and that he had for a moment seen himself as Christ at the second coming, worshipped by the dead and heralding the end of the world only to find that it is his own end that is rushing upon him. The tone of the whole of the passage is surely that of self-irony; the poet is mocking the seriousness with which he regarded himself and his poetic ambitions previously. The grandeur of the imagery is in that case not to be taken seriously either, and so by the last line of the section the poet transforms its meaning for us, and rather than indulging in self-pity as Margaret Davies has suggested (1), the poet is in fact destroying

(1) cf. Margaret Davies, "Apollinaire" p. 151

the megalomaniac dimensions of his old ambitions.

However, after the Apocalypse not all has been destroyed, for the next section opens on a note of cool self-analysis which explains many of the poem's difficulties. The manuscript entitled "Les Paroles Etoiles" had the third section of the final version in first place; this following fourth section came in second place. This order helps to confirm the interpretations we have advanced of section three and will advance for section four, for it shows that section three was originally to play the role that is played in the final version by the extract from "Le Printemps" (i.e. to make us aware that Apollinaire was a bad poet) and consequently section four in being a self-analysis which admits to past weaknesses is meant to make us feel that the poet has achieved some sort of maturity.

So the first line -

"J'ai eu le courage de regarder en arrière"

- in its calm matter-of-factness switches the reader away from the cosmic vision of the preceding section, and creates the distance necessary for him to see it for what it is, should this not already be apparent to him. Again the poet is refusing to allow us to remain in any one mood, to allow us to see in only one light anything he says. The poem is a commentary upon itself in the same way that a piece of "faux bois" incorporated into a collage is a comment upon the imitation of wood (or anything else for that matter) in art, as well as being a representation of wood. We offer this as an analogy and not as an indication that Apollinaire was applying Cubist principles to poetry - in any case the collage had not been invented at the time of composition of "Les Fiançailles".

The tone of this section is that of self-analysis, as we

have said; it is also the familiar confessional tone of much of Apollinaire's poetry as we have already seen in "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé", for example.

"Adieu faux amour confondu
Avec la femme qui s'éloigne
Avec celle que j'ai perdue
L'année dernière en Allemagne
Et que je ne reverrai plus" (I)

The similarity is not only in the tone, but also in the inclusion of biographical detail which because of its unknown quantity effect, as far as the ordinary reader is concerned, lends a poignance to the imagery, which is in any case rather too sentimental. From across the threshold of maturity the poet is looking back at his youth, including his love scenes in the lemon groves that have served as material for the poetry of the kind in the first section. But at the same time these lemon trees serve also as a symbol of the new immediacy and intensity that the poet is attempting to achieve in his poetry :

" de petits bois de citronniers
Qui fleurissent et fructifient
En même temps et en toute saison"

The word which springs to mind in connection with this image is simultaneity, and clearly the germ of much of Apollinaire's later thinking is present here. Returning to our consideration of the poem as a whole we may say that Apollinaire intended its various sections to exist simultaneously with one another. That he is here juxtaposing his past, his present and his future, so that as well

as writing a poem about the problems of writing poetry, he is presenting a simultaneous portrait of himself. Once again we find that Apollinaire arrived at the concept before he arrived at the word which he was eventually to use to describe it and as we shall see in our discussion of "Calligrammes" it was his own ideas of simultaneity which were relevant to Apollinaire's discussions of Delaunay's paintings and to his own poems of that period. Here, of course, the idea of simultaneity is not fully developed, we must not forget that the poet describes his past as -

"Les cadavres de mes jours"

- whereas in a truly simultaneous poem his past would have been a living presence in the poem, which it is in "Les Fiançailles" only in the sense that the examples taken from his past in the form of poetry must be alive enough to maintain the source of conflict between the sections of the poem which is the poet's principal weapon of surprise.

The section ends on a very complex image which may be seen as the kind of poetry which will enable the poet to express himself:

"D'autres jours ont pleuré avant de mourir dans des tavernes
Où d'ardents bouquets rouaient
Aux yeux d'une mulâtresse qui inventait la poésie
Et les roses de l'électricité s'ouvrent encore
Dans le jardin de ma mémoire"

Although the poem is about the writing of poetry this is the first time that we actually encounter the word "poésie" (it does not appear at all in "Le Brasier") and this is not without significance. The first three lines quoted above may be taken as an expression of the weepy sentimentality and the temptation to open sensuality to which the poet is prey, especially when his faculties are impaired

through drinking. If the poet has not put a capital at "poésie" he has nevertheless used the word in an ironic context ; the "ardents bouquets" and the "mulâtresse" are represented as sensual elements which "invent" poetry, and even in spite of the preceding line which should warn us that this statement is not to be taken at face value, the presence of the word poetry itself is such that we are led to believe that these are the sources of poetry, of his poetry which the poet is laying before us. But, the final two lines of the section clash so sharply in tone and in quality (the modernity, even vulgarity of the "roses de l'électricité" cannot but contrast with the "ardents bouquets") that no sooner is the image created in our imaginations than it is destroyed. The opposition of the sensual/potentially symbolic to the brash and modern which here has a quality of suddenness and surprise which is created by the order of the words and their grammatical forms, i.e. "Les roses de l'électricité" is more effective than "les roses électriques" would have been because the former locution allows the image of the rose to form in the reader's imagination before transmuting it to the strange image which the poet is using to change our understanding of the section. The fact that the "roses de l'électricité" are meant as images of the modern world is made even clearer from an examination of the text of "Les Paroles Etoiles" which reads :

"Aux yeux d'une mulâtresse qui inventait la poésie de

/l'électricité

Et, les roses (des becs de gaz) poussent encore au jardin

/de ma mémoire"

Obviously, in the transition from this draft to the final version the poet has changed considerably what he is saying, and if he has

rejected the close, perhaps too close, association of the roses and the gas-lights, he has nonetheless retained the element of similarity between them, by transferring the "de l'électricité" to the roses. This, of course, also changes what he was saying about the poetry invented by the "mulâtresse" which, in the final version, loses its associations with the modern world but acquires thereby a more sensual element through its simplified associations with the "mulâtresse". Undoubtedly the final version is more surprising than the original, for whatever unusual value might have been present in the phrase "la poésie de l'électricité", is more than made up for by the surprise which the poet creates in the juxtaposition of the two conflicting images.

By relegating the symbols of the city to his memory, the poet, while admitting their continued presence in his mind, is rejecting the role of the "poète citadin". He is not content to describe the city as writers of previous centuries have been the poets of the countryside. Implied in this rejection of these two types of poetry is the idea of the present maturity of the poet which will find its expression elsewhere. That is to say not in the kinds of poetry symbolised in the images described above, but at the same time in the complexity of the passage as a whole. His poetry will be the poetry of surprise and juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated elements which refuses to allow the reader the comfort of a recognisable genre, or of a simple and sustained mood. Duality of function is the key to this new imagery, arising from the autonomy of the elements which allows the "ardents bouquets" and the "roses de l'électricité" to be themselves as well as conflicting elements of the complex whole. Our analysis here, we think, goes beyond what the reader can really be expected to seize by himself at this

point, although we think that we have expressed no more than Apollinaire intended to express here. Perhaps the connections between the elements of this last part of the section are not quite as inevitable as the poet intended to make them (the "Et les roses" is probably a bit weak) and consequently one has to try harder to grasp the significance of this section than should be necessary.

The next section of the poem, the fifth, begins by asking our indulgence ; the resemblance to the "Ayez pitié de moi" of "La Jolie Rousse", in tone at least, is inescapable. We cannot really take either at its face value; in this case not only is there the contrast with the significance of the end of the preceding section but there is also the fact that we have now read four sections of the poem and are beginning to see how the poem as a whole is functioning and what makes it different from the "ancien jeu des vers" which the poet has forgotten. There is also implied in the word "ancien" the idea that it is no longer relevant to anyone in the twentieth century to write poems in this manner. At the same time the poet may be genuinely asking our indulgence for this new form of poetry ; after all it is highly experimental and is breaking with a tradition which has survived for hundreds of years.

Declaring this, then, the poet is making a tabula rasa for himself to begin the creation of the new poetry -

"Je ne sais plus rien et j'aime uniquement"

- he is adopting the position of the artistic primitive who has nothing but his love to express. Clearly the love which he has to express is not simply his attachment to a woman but rather a sentiment of which the whole of humanity is the object, which is

the love of life itself.

The section begins with three lines of statement, bare of imagery, so that the fourth line with its visual element carries all the more weight, but this line compared with a similar one in "Le Brasier" -

"Dans la plaine ont poussé des flammes"

- is weak. It is weak because the image of the flame has not been given the development in this poem which it received in "Le Brasier", and so the metamorphosis of flower to flame here seems to be purely destructive, whereas we assume the poet to be saying that the flowers, elements of the real world, are to him only the material for creation, in the sense that the flame is the symbol of the power of his imagination, which transmutes them. This may become clearer from the next two lines in which the poet assumes a God-like attitude to creation :

"Je médite divinement

Et je souris des êtres que je n'ai pas créés"

Again the first line of these two is felt much more if it is considered in the light of a similar statement in "Le Brasier" :

"Descendant des hauteurs où pense la lumière"

In saying "Je médite divinement" the poet is according to the creatures of his imagination the same status as is possessed by those creatures created by God, or the creator of the visual universe. Hence the fact that the poet can afford to smile at those beings whom he himself has not created for he knows that they are no different from the ones which he can and does create. But the next three lines place certain limitations on the poet's creative powers :

"Mais si le temps venait où l'ombre enfin solide

Se multipliait en réalisant la diversité formelle de mon

/amour

J'admirerais mon ouvrage"

The poet seems to be saying that the creative powers which he has just claimed apply only to the realms of his imagination and that he has not yet been able to render these shadows solid, by endowing them with poetic form. Thus his love, his motive power, has outstripped his poetic abilities, and so the note of apology at the beginning of the section comes to seem more genuine.

This section as a whole seems less powerful than the preceding ones ; its tone is for the most part the fairly flat tone of a direct statement and as such does present a contrast with the preceding section, does take on the authority of one speaking calmly after the efforts of sections two, three and four, but it has more need of being followed by the reader than were the other sections which seek to impose themselves on the reader. That is not to say that it is a failure ; the poet is here achieving his ends by understatement (in the tone) which is all the more effective because of the tensions of the rest of the poem. Nevertheless this does mean that this key section does not depend upon violence to achieve its ends ; but then the techniques of violence have to be combined with other technical means if the poet is to achieve breadth of expression in his work.

The next section, the sixth, has no original in the "Paroles Etoiles" manuscript, in which the preceding section was followed by the section which became the second in the final version. It is almost a shock in itself to find that the poem does not end on the qualified note of self praise -

"J'admirerais mon ouvrage"

- but not only does it continue, it does so with a statement which seems so totally irrelevant that it takes the reader completely by surprise :

"J'observe le repos du dimanche

Et je loue la paresse"

If one can see in the first line a continuation of the poet's view of himself as God, resting on the seventh day, what is one to make of the second line, where he praises one of the seven deadly sins? And this is followed by the earnestly expressed question -

"Comment comment réduire

L'infiniment petite science

Que m'imposent mes sens"

- meaning perhaps how can he go beyond the experience of the world which is imposed on him by his senses? If this is so, then why does he use the word "reduce"? Perhaps so that the experience of the imagination may become more important. Surprise has again become the principal element of the imagery. We cannot for the moment penetrate the meaning of these first lines, and so we read on discovering the poet's strange description of his senses. The description of the first of these leads us through so many similes that we cannot find their common factor and the identity of the sense escapes us. But the imagery communicates to us an impression of vastness, and cyclical change which leads us to think it timeless, and then we find this strange and disturbing image :

"Il vit décapité sa tête est le soleil

Et la lune son cou tranché"

We cannot escape the impression of an almost hysterical act of self-immolation, such as that which takes place in "Le Brasier",

which leads to some kind of communion with the universe. But there seems to be some kind of dichotomy existing between the sun and the moon images, by which the poet expresses a liberation of self leading to knowledge, his head has become the sun looking down upon the earth and other men and so seeing all that they can and will do, while the decapitated body remains as the moon, a dead planet which can only reflect the light of the sun.

"Je voudrais éprouver une ardeur infinie"

This line obviously plays on the double meaning of the word "ardeur" which is both a passion and a real burning, the desire to be consumed and the act of self-consumption as in "Le Brasier" where the poet is at the same time both the body consumed by the flame and the flame itself. This seems to reflect back on the sun/moon image and reinforces the idea that the moon and the discarded body are being set aside in the quest for the experience which the poet desires. Now we find the sense of the first two lines becoming clearer, for if the poet is relying upon his head to provide his experiences then there is no need for him to move, his mobility is the mobility of the imagination, as it is in "Le Brasier" :

"Et voici le spectacle

Et pour toujours je suis assis dans un fauteuil"

And so, also in retrospect, we see the meaning of the question which the poet puts in lines three to five, for if he desires to limit his experience of the world through his immobility, then he is logical in trying to reduce his purely sensual experience of the world to the advantage of the imaginative experience of it. In this light the following images which describe his senses are relatively easy to understand, although nonetheless surprising for this :

"Monstre de mon ouïe tu rugis et tu pleures
 Le tonnerre te sert de chevelure
 Et tes griffes répètent le chant des oiseaux"

The poet's hearing is monstrous because it gets in the way of his appreciation of the sounds of his imagination, and probably also because it gets in the way of the sounds of his own poetry and the comparison is unfavourable to them ; what poet can hope to roar like thunder or sing like the birds? Hence the wounding power of the latter, expressed through "griffes", the magnificent surrealist vision of the former, in which the poet is clearly pointing his own way out of the dilemma he describes. There can be no doubt that these images by their total unexpectedness, by their complete strangeness strike the reader's sensibility so that he finds the vision which they create inescapable. In other words, the poet's imagination has created an image which is as natural in its own world as is thunder or birdsong in the normal world of our experience, and so the poet by renouncing any attempt at imitating the sonorous effects of thunder and by turning to his imagination offers us a new experience.

What, then, do we make of the next line? :

"Le toucher monstrueux m'a pénétré m'empoisonne"

Is the poet not saying here that he cannot escape the sense of touching something as he can block his ears? So the knowledge of the external world which is usually brought to us by our physical contact with it becomes a poison which contaminates the imagination.

Even the eyes cannot escape, for by closing them one does not cease to see, but rather obtains a release from the real world that is more intensely visible :

"Mes yeux nagent loin de moi

Et les astres intacts sont mes maîtres sans épreuve"

The direct and obvious statement of this must be avoided however, the image must still surprise the reader if the identity of form and content is to be maintained, and it seems fair to us to say that this is the case with this image with its echo of "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé" :

"Voix lactée & soeur lumineuse
Des blancs ruisseaux de Chanaan
Et des corps blancs des amoureuses
Nageurs morts suivrons-nous d'ahan
Ton cours vers d'autres nébuleuses" (I)

The use of the word "nagent" seems to bring out the similarity of shape between eyes and fish which adds to the strangeness of the image, as the fish also are out of their element.

We should not fail to note the significance of the use of the word "astres" in the next line, for its value is to contrast with "étoiles" in the previous sections so that there should be no ambiguity about the identity of the stars here ; they are real - hence the description of them as "intacts" - untouched, that is, by the stain of symbolic value. Moreover they are untouched by the senses and hence superior to;the poet. This line then would seem to be an admission of the limitations of the imagination, as the perceptions of imaginative experience work through the medium of the senses even when turned away from the external world. (i.e. one "sees" things with ones eyes closed etc.)

"Et les astres intacts sont mes maîtres sans épreuve
La bête des fumées à la tête fleurie

Et le monstre le plus beau

Ayant la saveur du laurier se désole"

Resulting from this is the sadness of the poetic sense which is the "monstre le plus beau". Might one not also legitimately see in the "astres intacts" the words themselves, the medium of the poet which he can never make as pure as paint or sound the media of his fellow artists? If the "étoiles" of the preceding sections were not only symbols but examples of symbolic functions in poetry also, are the "astres intacts" not the persistent level of the linguistic element of poetry as well as the persistent level of vision which is present in the imagination even if the eyes are closed? This seems to us to be the most logical interpretation of this passage in view of the poet's initial desire to reduce his sensual experience of the world as he could reduce the mobility of his body to replace it by the mobility of his spirit, and also in view of the sadness of the "bête des fumées à la tête fleurie", a magnificently surreal image of the poetic sense which is here closely identified with the imagination. (I)

The success or failure of this section turns upon the power of the imagery to persuade the reader that the imagination is indeed the fertile source of creativity that the poet is claiming it to be. So in this section, in radical contrast to the preceding one, the poet has made his imagery as violent as possible. Why else should he introduce the qualification of "du dimanche" in the first line, other than through a desire to shock by its proximity

(I) cf. Breunig's "Apollinaire's Les Fiançailles" pp. 21-22. It seems to us that Breunig's conclusions do not here follow from what he is saying.

to the praise of laziness, for there is no other reference to religion in the section? The totally disconnected points of comparison which are offered for the first of the poet's senses, are surely there primarily to be a source of surprise. The paradox which introduces the strangest image -

"Il vit décapité"

must surely destroy any lingering comparisons with reality. And so to the final images which have completely transcended reality and which merit the qualification of surreal. The ultimate contradiction which assails the reader is the note of sadness and the admission of partial defeat on which the section ends.

In its turn this sadness is contradicted by the beginning of the next section as the poet takes the only step left open to him in his desire to surpass reality. -

"A la fin les mensonges ne me font plus peur"

He will lie, he will oppose his statements of the nature of things to our perceptions and he gives a superb example in the following line :

"C'est la lune qui cuit comme un oeuf sur le plat" (1)

This line which he has taken from the poem referred to earlier "Les villes sont pleines" where it is placed in a context which severely limits it -

"Les meurt-de-faim les sans-le-sou voyaient la lune

Etalée dans le ciel comme un oeuf sur le plat" (2)

(1) Our interpretation is completely opposed to that of Margaret Davies (Apollinaire p. 155) which seems to us to be based on a simple misunderstanding of the French.

(2) O.P., p. 563

- is not intended as a metaphor in the normal conception of the word, nor is it meant to communicate to us some truth, Platonic or otherwise, which lies behind the phenomena moon and fried egg as we may perceive them. On the contrary, it brings together these two things so that we may be aware that they are totally different while the poet is comparing them, thus demonstrating the power of the poet, the power of his medium, language. (It is surely on the verbal level that we can accept this rapprochement, as a visual comparison will really bring out the differences where language identifies the two things, binding them by the power of the verb.) So the image becomes an example of an alternative world, and the degree to which it can surprise us will be the measure of its viability. Thus if the imagination has its limitations, the poet can supersede them by recourse to language which will allow him to juxtapose the essentially disparate. The consequences of such a step are clear - the poet may then attempt to evoke surprise as a value in itself, knowing that the reader's reaction will then be akin to the child's sense of wonder when faced with the world and thus attempt the restoration of man's lost innocence ; or the poet may try to use the violence of his technique in the simultaneously constructive and destructive fashion which we have noted with regard to previous images of violence in Apollinaire, i.e. both destroying the old world, that of the reader's perceptions, and substituting for it the new, that of the poet's imagination, the most probable result of this being the stimulation of a comparison between the two, which further underlines the autonomy of the world of the imagination.

The application of these ideas to the image in question allows us to say that the role of such an image is not to reveal the mystic

link between the moon and a fried egg, but rather to make us see that the difference between them lies in ourselves so that only in abnormal circumstances can we identify the two phenomena as the starving beggars do in "Les villes sont pleines". But our imagination may make this leap and we may choose the experience of the alternative worlds of the imagination in preference to that of our learned responses, which leads us to one of the fundamental principles of surrealism as it was to develop in the hands of Apollinaire's successors.

This, then, is the new poetry which Apollinaire was creating, and if we are not overwhelmed by its audacity and its fundamental break with tradition, then it is to us that the poet is apologising in the fifth section of the poem, and it is we whom he will describe as -

"Vous dont la bouche est faite à l'image de celle de Dieu
Bouche qui est l'ordre même" (I)

- in "La Jolie Rousse", which many see as his final testament.

The philosophical position of the poet is logically unassailable, for if we assume that God is dead then the keystone of universal order is removed, and so the creations of the imagination are on the same plane as the perceivable universe ; and if we do not assume the absence of God then we may see the creations of the imagination as inferior but do not necessarily reject them and so need not be antagonistic to the poet, as he indicates in "La Jolie Rousse" :

"Nous ne sommes pas vos ennemis"

The ambiguity of the poet's attitude towards religion is as implicit

then in this poem as it is explicit in "Zone".

This development should have made quite clear the capital importance of this section of the poem. Following on from line two we find that the poet has once again made a leap which completely overtakes all logical connection -

"Ce collier de gouttes d'eau va parer la noyée"

- and we are now worlds away from the preceding line. Who is the drowned woman and why is she being offered the cruelly ironic decoration? The questions of course find no answer but that does not mean that the image has no function other than that of surprising the reader. The necklace of drops of water, the kind of thing we may see on a spider's web after a shower, is something ephemeral and beautiful. It is the kind of perfection which each moment is in itself although doomed to disappear, it is also the symbol of the imagery of the poem itself which is sequential as one moment succeeds the previous one. This necklace is being offered to the dead woman, who is of course not real but is rather the poet's old loves - his old inspiration and hence his old poetry. Thus the grandiose image of the drowned woman (with its Shakespearian overtones of Ophelia) is superseded by the necklace of water-drops, beautiful, ephemeral and commonplace instead of a necklace of rare and precious stones ; for if the necklace is placed upon the dead woman then it is something that outlasts her - and by the link of water, destroyed her.

Even without these depths, which may be disputed, the image, in following the statement about lies, is also to be seen as an example of poetic truth rather than an empiric truth, and therefore, as a creation of the imagination, this offering of the necklace, which has the three essential qualities of beauty,

banality and ephemerality, to the dead woman, acquires this dimension of ritual in which the past is offered the tribute of the present ; but the cruel irony is inescapable, and so the present is seen as superior to the past.

"Voici mon bouquet de fleurs de la Passion

Qui offrent tendrement deux couronnes d'épines"

The same idea of a gift which brings pain is present here in this image which also re-introduces the idea of martyrdom present in section two. The double meaning of "Passion" is clear and the image is constructed so as to have a sting in the tail which is destined to take us by surprise. Until the words "deux couronnes d'épines" the image seems to have overtones much more erotic than religious. In expressing this image as an offer the poet is saying - here are the beauties which I have made out of martyrdom (that of either sacred or profane love); they offer crowns of thorns. The possibilities of interpretation are multiple, but the important thing to remember here is that the statement is a lie i.e. a poetic or imaginative truth and as such is valid only within the poetic universe, so ^{that} we must see this statement as meaning martyrdom continues as long as the imagination seeks it.

The next line continues the imagery of water, but makes it more immediate to the poet's own person ; the rain which fell a short time ago is inescapably linked in our minds with the necklace which adorns the drowned woman and so the same relationship of past to present pervades the lines which directly concern the poet. His past is with him - the past of bad poetry in a worn out style, but he is working towards something new, his own salvation, which he expresses with his own humorous note in the next line :

"Des anges diligents travaillent pour moi à la maison"

Another lie which is a truth, for if we understand this statement in the light of the poet's remarks about the irrelevance of physical mobility to the flight of the imagination then we may say that the angels are literally figments of the poet's imagination which do their work whether or not he is physically absent - yet we cannot take such a statement literally, so it is a lie. To describe the poet's exploitation of paradox as systematic, however, would be to underestimate his technique ; for by a constant variation of tone the poet prevents the reader from accepting simply that the section is merely paradox. Each image comes as a surprise, and the humour of this particular line is what catches us unawares.

The next two lines create a very strange impression :

"La lune et la tristesse disparaîtront pendant

Toute la sainte journée"

The image of the moon returns associated with sadness as it was in the preceding section. But by ending the line at "pendant" the poet surprises us with the next line for we expect a different period to be the time of the moon's invisibility, although the day is logical enough. Thus the daytime is the time of the sun, the time of the liberated imagination, and the time of happiness. Why should night eclipse this new aesthetic? The implication is undoubtedly that the moon and sadness will re-appear at night. We are given no answer ; the question is left hanging in mid-air like the second of these two lines. The night may be metaphoric, it may be real, it is most probably an acceptance of the fact that the imagination must come down to earth, such as we find in the preceding section. The colloquial overtone of the second line echoes the humour as well as the idea of salvation present in the image of the diligent angels.

The next line begins by picking up the last :

"Toute la sainte journée j'ai marché en chantant"

This we know was Apollinaire's method, or one of his methods, of composing his poems and here it carries with it this idea of composition thanks to the preceding image which associates the day with the period of creativity. The section closes on an ambiguous image which may be seen as the poet describing humourously the reaction of someone who has seen him walking past singing to himself, and suddenly we see ourselves as that woman, because we have watched the poet in the process of composing the poem as we have followed the poem's contradictions and conflicts. There is, however, a note of sadness which arises from our being given the viewpoint of the woman and so seeing the poet retreating into the distance and surely the reason for the presence of the woman in the poem is to remind the reader that he, like her, is an outsider in this matter. Can the poet be saying that his imagination is again carrying him beyond our reach, or more likely, that because the imagination cannot work unhindered he is slipping away from us - an interpretation which is supported by the phrasing which isolates the words "M'éligner en chantant". The poet goes off composing his poetry and we are left behind. So the section ends, but the poem continues. And once again we are confronted by a contradiction within the section itself for as it began on a note of affirmation of courage and power, it ends on a note, not of defeat, but of compromise ; Apollinaire is aware that in this new style he may not always take the reader with him. The poet still lacks the confidence which he displays in "Les Collines" :

"Je dis ce qu'est au vrai la vie

Seul je pouvais chanter ainsi" (I)

Nevertheless he begins the next section simply by throwing out the new poetry and leaving it to stand or fall by itself, so he could not have been entirely without confidence in it. When we pass from section seven to section eight, there is a measure of physical continuity which derives from the poet's motion - at the end of one section he walks off down the street, at the beginning of the next he turns a corner ; but what he sees on turning the corner makes a complete break. Some sailors appear, who have not hitherto been present in the poem and who are not mentioned again although the décor of this section is that of a port.

"Au tournant d'une rue je vis des matelots

Qui dansaient le cou nu au son d'un accordéon"

There is nothing essentially surprising in the appearance of the sailors themselves, they are for the reader simply what the poet is seeing as he walks along. Yet the fact that the walk continues at all after the sadness of the end of the last section is surprising and there is, of course, a great contrast in tone in the natural gaiety of this image of the dancing sailors, a contrast which is made sharper for its sudden appearance. The reader feels this image to be a detail which the poet has observed and which he has incorporated into the poem ; if its meaning is not entirely clear it is at least obvious that it is there to contrast poignantly with the end of the preceding section. It is external, compared with the subjective imagery of the lines which precede it and also those which follow it :

"J'ai tout donné au soleil

Tout sauf mon ombre"

Again the poet is clearly exploiting a rupture in the tone of the poem to surprise the reader. The sun is inevitably

associated with the line "Il vit décapité sa tête est le soleil" from the sixth section, and so the reader interprets this line as meaning that the poet has given everything to his desire to create except his shadow. A curious reservation! If the poet has given his body how can his shadow remain? By the juxtaposing of these four lines of the first verse, the poet manages to suggest, in spite of the lack of all logical connection, that the image of the sailors dancing is something to do with his shadow. Can it then be a remembered scene which the poet has introduced to begin this section? We know from a study such as that of Madame Durry (I) that for Apollinaire the image of the shadow stood for his past as the image of light stood for his future. Although this is clear from a study of his poetry as a whole in which one feels the accumulation of striking images such as this -

"Ténébreuse épouse que j'aime"

- from "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé" in which the woman is made inescapably into a figure from the poet's past by the use of the word "ténébreuse"; this is not immediately clear in the context of this image and this poem. Nevertheless through the connection of the two images which is brought about by their juxtaposition, the idea that the poet is referring to his past dawns upon the reader. (The change of tense from past definite to the perfect undoubtedly helps here.) From the unusual context arises the idea that the image of the sailors dancing is a memory, and one which has not been offered to the fire. The image does not yield its secret ; it is not meant to. Yet in the light of factors external to the poem there can be no doubt that the poet in this image of the sailors sees himself as

(I) cf. Durry, t.3, pp. 191 et seq.

he was as a child.

Consider this quotation from Adéma's biography :

"Une photographie des deux frères, que je possède, en porte également témoignage. Elle a été exécutée par Roberto Peli, Via Farina, no. 10 à Bologne. Guillaume a de longs cheveux lui tombant sur les épaules et porte déjà le costume marin qu'affectionnait sa mère et dont elle vêtira longtemps ses deux fils." (1)
Adéma is discussing the fact that Apollinaire first came to France at the age of three and then returned to Italy, so that clearly there are two primary associations here for Apollinaire ; firstly the arrival in France and secondly his family background - both linked with the idea of the sailor's costume. Consider also this image from "Le Voyageur" :

"Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais quittés

Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais parlé" (2)

Was this not for Apollinaire an image of himself and his younger brother Albert? This becomes even more obvious in a later image from the same poem :

"Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais quittés

L'aîné portait au cou une chaîne de fer

Le plus jeune mettait ses cheveux blonds en tresse" (3)

Photographs of Apollinaire and his brother at an early age show both with abundant long hair!

So in this image of the dancing sailors Apollinaire was putting his past and its secrets - his illegitimate birth, the

(1) cf. Adéma (68), p. 23

(2) O.P., p. 79

(3) O.P., p. 80

identity of his father, his mother's scandalous career of which he was ashamed - perhaps all this is compressed into this tantalising image - for the poet. But it is not revealed to the reader. As we have said, however, the image appears as a secret memory, the one thing that Apollinaire holds back from the creative fire, and his impulse to tell of his life and experiences and yet still hold back the key which reveals the intimate biographical details is a well observed element of his poetry. The effect of the image then, is to create both surprise and mystery. The first line of the next verse details certain elements of the port scene and ends on a note of humorous ridicule :

"Les dragues les ballots les sirènes mi-mortes"

The first two elements are real, the sirens mythical (or real ships' sirens emitting a dying wail), so there is already a contrast before the unexpected adjective which destroys the romantic associations of the lure of ships, the voyages to distant lands. True the poet describes the sirens as only half-dead, and so an element of the temptation persists, but it carries no conviction - one flaw in the lure is enough to annul its effectiveness and so the image of the next line does not carry the reader with it on an imaginary voyage -

"A l'horizon brumeux s'enfouaient les trois-mâts"

- but rather represents the impossible voyage, the one which the poet will not make because he is too aware of the problems. So for him there is no fair wind to carry him away to foreign lands.-

"Les vents ont expiré couronnés d'anémones"

- the heavy scent of the flowers is more than they can bear ; the elements of the real world are cancelling one another out and so the poet turns to his imagination -

"O Vierge signe pur du troisième mois"

Virgo is the third of the signs of the Zodiac relating to the summer and was also the sign governing Apollinaire's birth ; so that here the poet is declaring that this was his destiny to be tempted by the sirens but to see through them and to prefer the purity which is that of his governing star.

In this stanza we have moved from the dock scene to the scented delicateness of the last two lines (which Apollinaire borrowed from his early poem "Le Printemps" and which this time he has integrated without intending the reader to notice anything except the change in tone). The immobility of the sixth section is allied now to purity which as we shall see is the purity of the martyr.

"Templiers flamboyants je brûle parmi vous"

Thus the final section begins on the martyr's pyre and in it the poet will unite all the themes of the poem. This first line identifies him with the Knights Templar in their martyrdom, and the poet, elevating himself to the rank of a Christian saint, claims the power of prophecy - he is now sure of his powers even if he is destroying himself to achieve them :

"Templiers flamboyants je brûle parmi vous

Prophétisons ensemble ô grand maître je suis"

We have isolated these lines because Apollinaire by abolishing the punctuation has freed the words from a set order of associations in the same way that he has freed his imagery. The original published version of the second line read :

"Prophétisons ensemble, ô grands maîtres, je suis

Le désirable feu " (I)

(I) cf. *Déc.*, p. 203

The elimination of the punctuation together with the change from the plural to the singular of the phrase "8 grands maîtres" has had the effect of creating a retroactive association of the "je suis" with the "8 grand maître". The poet returns to the tone of the second section of "Le Brasier", and not only identifies himself with the martyr but with the fire as well and this time he does go on to create a visionary tableau which only he can achieve through his act of self-immolation. Thus the "vous" in line three seems more to be addressed to the reader than to the grand master :

" je suis

Le désirable feu qui pour vous se dévoue"

The poet this time will reveal to us the fruits of his experience.

The next line explodes with meaning like the firework that is described in it. The repetition of the adjective "belle" lays heavy emphasis upon it :

"La girande tourne 8 belle 8 belle nuit"

The reduction of the fire to a display of fireworks is not trivialising it - the line takes us by surprise and is the very essence of ephemeral beauty that Apollinaire is proclaiming ; the statement deleted from the final section of "Les Paroles Etoiles" (I) :

"Puis j'ai reconnu que chaque moment porte en soi sa propre perfection" is here rendered perfectly in the form of an image which is much more convincing than a bare statement, and doubly so because of its unexpectedness.

We cannot fail to think of the remarkable image in "Les Collines", which has already been analysed in section two of chapter one :

(I) cf. Déc., p. 205

"Et je pèle pour mes amis
 L'orange dont la saveur est
 Un merveilleux feu d'artifice"

Many commentators, including M. Décaudin (1), have said that in this poem Apollinaire turns away from the search for perfection in poetry to find his material and inspiration in his everyday surroundings. This is certainly true, although it is more borne out by the imagery of his later poetry than the imagery of "Les Fiançailles" itself, but the really important point is that made by this crucial image - namely that each moment in its burning beautiful actuality is to be accepted in itself, as one accepts the ephemeral beauty of an exploding firework. The whole aesthetic structure of the poem is based upon this concept - the separating of the sections to allow each to stand on its own, joined only to the others by their proximity, just as one moment is joined to the previous one and the next one, but whole in itself also.

This freeing of the atoms of poetry, if we may be permitted the analogy, increases the possible number of combinations as was demonstrated on a simple level with the words in line two of this final section. And now the first line of the second verse enunciates the theory :

"Liens déliés par une libre flamme Ardeur"

(1) cf. Déc., p. 207, "Il n'est plus question maintenant de satisfaire à un excessif souci de perfection et à l'art poétique. La poésie est dans la vie même de l'homme, dans sa sensibilité, dans le regard qu'il jette sur le monde. Expérience capitale, dans laquelle se découvre les véritables valeurs poétiques.

The paradox of the "Liens déliés" contains the essence of the technique ; violent in itself, it violates all our normal conceptions of the functions of language and of the way in which a poem is written and understood. By undoing the bonds the poet releases the energy of the poem ; by suppressing conventional associations the poet makes possible new and surprising ones. Freedom and experience are the essence of the new poetry which the poet is offering in place of the imitation of the ordered universe.

But once again the poet's confidence seems to fail him, he is still obsessed with the idea of martyrdom, believing it necessary to destroy himself in order to achieve this overwhelming experience of liberty :

"

Ardeur

Que mon souffle éteindra O Morts à quarantaine

Je mire de ma mort la gloire et le malheur

Comme si je visais l'oiseau de la quintaine"

The interpretations of these lines are many, some even going so far as to profess to see in the end of the second line a prophetic reference to the poet's death at almost forty years of age! Is, in that case, the breath referred to in the first part of the line the poet's last, and therefore the sense of the line that Apollinaire is the last of those who will be able to reveal the new, the future to us? We cannot ignore this possibility. On the other hand the line could be interpreted as meaning that the poet will extinguish the flame, i.e. will make it no longer necessary to die in order to achieve this transcendental experience, and the "Morts à quarantaine" could be those who died forty together like the martyrs of Sebastopol to whom he refers in "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé".

Whatever interpretation we place upon this line it retains something of the esoteric quality of oracular pronouncement, as indeed it is meant to do.

The next two lines are heavy with erotic overtones which themselves are shot through with violence. If the second line is more explicitly sexual than the first then at least in retrospect we cannot escape the double meaning of "mort" in the former. The image is admirable, the brevity and absolute self-sufficiency of orgasm, with the presence of real death and the violence of the medieval jousting game, is the ideal image of the poetic experience which Apollinaire is offering. (1)

The last verse returns us to a décor similar to that of the opening section but transformed totally by all that the poet and ourselves have experienced :

"Incertitude oiseau feint peint quand vous tombiez

Le soleil et l'amour dansaient dans le village"

The image of the "oiseau de la quintaine" is continued ; but it is not a real bird and this is seen when the target is hit and it falls. By associating it with his hesitations Apollinaire shows that it is difficult to avoid uncertainty but he is shown to be right on achieving his goal - for the bird is seen to be painted when it falls. This calls to mind the image of "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé" -

"Malheur dieu pâle aux yeux d'ivoire

+ + +

Malheur dieu qu'il ne faut pas croire" (2)

(1) The sexual meaning of the image is made clear in Déc., p.208

(2) O.P., p. 54

- in which temptation is also very powerfully expressed and rejected ultimately. Rid of temptation to draw back from this new and demanding creative role, the poet is now free to reveal the identity of the couple whose betrothal is being celebrated :

"Le soleil et l'amour dansaient dans le village"

Love, which has been the poet's sole support throughout the trials of the poem is now allied to the sun, the freed imagination, and the result is :

"Et tes enfants galants bien ou mal habillés

Ont bâti ce bûcher le nid de mon courage"

The "tes" undoubtedly refers to the poet, and his children are the parts of this poem which, polished or roughly finished, go to make up the whole poem, the poet's testimony of his new powers, his ordeal by fire.

There is in the second line of this last verse a note of naïve happiness which lends a kind of innocence to this crucial image which seems to surpass all the struggles which the poet has undertaken in order to achieve this union upon which his new poetry is founded. But we should not forget that it is only a betrothal which is being celebrated and not a wedding - the poet himself was not sure enough of his own strength to announce the indissoluble union of his two driving forces, the sun and love.

After this lengthy analysis of "Les Fiançailles", in which we have attempted to bring out the meaning of the poem so as to make absolutely clear the role and importance of the images of violence which are present in the poem, it is obvious that this poem more than any other that has been considered to date was for Apollinaire the one in which he forged a new poetic technique, the one in which he attempted to bring about his own spiritual rebirth

by destroying his old self. Strangely the image of the Phoenix is absent from the poem for it is the image which would seem most suited to the role which Apollinaire had set himself in his task; perhaps it is a measure of how difficult this task was for him that the image of the Phoenix does not appear - Apollinaire was not certain that he was to survive as a poet this self-inflicted fire. Thus, although there is a hint that Apollinaire sees himself as the Phoenix in the final line, the emphasis on courage reveals his uncertainty about the rebirth that should follow.

We now turn to one of the most difficult texts which Apollinaire ever wrote but one which is also absolutely essential to an understanding of the progress of his poetry during these crucial years ; that is to say "Onirocritique" (I). Any analysis of this prose poem must begin with the title which means the critique of dreams. As we have already seen in this section Apollinaire was greatly concerned at this time with the status of the poet as a creator, as a rival to God ; and there could be no more natural consideration for him than that of dreams, for when a man is dreaming he creates an entire universe in which the laws of his waking existence have no part. To dream is to recreate the world in one's own image. Understandably then, we find Apollinaire attempting to analyse this process ; or so it seems. In fact this poem is not an account of a dream at all, it is probably not even a deliberately induced hallucination.

What Apollinaire is attempting to do here is to act as though he were dreaming and to create a universe which bears no relation to the one we know. So if there is here a kind of "dérèglement des

sens", it remains at the linguistic level ; that is to say that the poet when he says - "les vallons où les pommiers chantaient" did not really hear, or dream he heard, or think he heard apple trees singing, but rather chose to write this as something that is outwith the normal experience of any man and so place himself on the level of creator of a universe which has its own laws. May we not say then, that the poem rather than being a dream, is a parallel to a dream, and therefore a critique or analysis of dreams to the extent that it is a commentary upon them by being the same action taken in full consciousness? This is what we intend to show in the following pages, and also that the poet depends upon techniques of violence for the ability to create his unreal universe.

Let us consider the opening of the poem :

"Les charbons du ciel étaient si proches que je craignais leur ardeur. Ils étaient sur le point de me brûler".

In the very first words we come upon a statement which runs counter to our normal perceptions of reality - "Les charbons du ciel"; but it does more than that : it destroys all possible ideas of scale ; how big is a being to whom the stars are like lumps of coal? The poet has grown to fill the space between earth and sky ; or has the sky fallen? Whichever image the phrase evokes it is clear that we are no longer in the world as we know it. In this case, although the image comes as a surprise to us we cannot really speak of violence ; rather the poem begins as does a dream, by surrounding us with the abnormal in such a way that it seems normal. The real shocks and surprise come later.

Thus the introduction of the next sentence expresses some kind of opposition to the opening -

"Mais j'avais la conscience des éternités différentes de l'homme et de la femme."

- where no logical opposition exists. The timelessness of the dream is linked to the eternal masculine/feminine dichotomy of the universe. Already the reader has no anchor left to attach him to reality. By suppressing all logic, as we know it, and by transforming normal objects into something different while allowing them to retain enough of their original identity to be recognisable as what they are, the poet has created the dream atmosphere. This conflict between knowing what a thing is and what we observe it to be in a dream is the essential detail of the alternative universe, i.e. we may while dreaming see an animal (for example) and yet know that that animal is in fact a door, and treat it like a door ; thus we are combining two different awarenesses of the same object which cannot possibly be combined when we are awake. This is what Apollinaire does in the first words of the poem. We know that "Les charbons du ciel" are stars but by using the word "charbons" Apollinaire forces us to accept the co-existence of these two contradictory realities, thus creating a dream through the use of language.

In the same way he uses such phrases as "des grappes de lunes", so that we may speak of a violation of reality, as the linguistic apprehension which we have of such images cannot be reconciled with observable reality as we know it. But this is, of course, not the only way in which the poet maintains the dream-universe. He also makes free use of metamorphosis which by its very nature is outside our knowledge of the properties of an object - "Arrivé au bord d'une fleuve je le pris à deux mains et le brandis. Cette épée me désaltéra" We think it mistaken to try

to see in this kind of image the type of metaphor which is meant to reveal something in the nature of a hidden reality between the two terms. The metamorphosis of one object into another is meant to surprise the reader and it does this by bringing together two completely unrelated objects. The possible element of similarity between these two objects, river and sword, i.e. they are both ^lsilver, is pushed into the background by the attribution of the qualities of one to the other and vice-versa ; it is the river which is brandished and the sword which slakes the poet's thirst.

Two more important elements of the dream atmosphere which we encounter in the poem are the multiplication of self and the spectacle of unreal violence. Both these aspects are joined in the following image :

"Centuplé, je nageais vers un archipel. Cent matelots m'accueillirent et m'ayant mené dans un palais, ils m'y tuèrent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf fois." Because the personality of the narrator is only present in the grammatical context, i.e. the person of the verbs, the reader has no image to multiply by a hundred other than his own, but this is not possible to the imagination of a waking person. Clearly also the destruction of ninety-nine of the narrator's selves is intended to exploit the inability of the conscious person to assimilate the dream combination of emotions of danger and security ; of facing destruction and knowing oneself to be safe.

It seems to us that it is by now clearly established that the poet is deliberately attempting to keep his dream world free from the reader's grasp ; that he is constantly springing upon the reader an image which eludes all assimilation to normal experience and so forces the reader outside the boundaries of his

normal experience, so that all knowledge he has of the world of the poem springs from the poem itself. Every line of this text provides us with examples which we could quote, but what we wish to do here is to establish the poet's methods rather than to analyse in detail this poem which would lead us into the province of the psychologist. This done, there is an obvious parallel to be drawn between the poet's technique in "Les Fiançailles" and his technique in this poem. That parallel lies in the use of images which surprise the reader and in so doing destroy the world as he knows it in order to create the unreal world of the poem.

The significant difference between the two poems lies in the fact that in "Onirocritique" the poet allows no contact at all with either reality or with statement, so that the poem must stand or fall entirely upon the success of its imagery, whereas in "Les Fiançailles" although the images are frequently called upon to operate in their own world they are meant to communicate meaning of some kind to the reader. For example, the key images of the final section of the poem -

"Et la girande tourne ô belle ô belle nuit

Liens déliés par une libre flamme Ardeur

Que mon souffle éteindra O Morts à quarantaine

Je mire de ma mort la gloire et le malheur

Comme si je visais l'oiseau de la quintaine" (I)

- these images although freed from reality, whether visual, functional or even the reality of syntax and hence outwith the normal realm of the reader's experience are there to convey to the reader

the nature of the poetic experience which the poet is undergoing as he writes "Les Fiançailles".

On the other hand the imagery of "Onirocritique", although there are certain thematic expressions which run through the poem such as -

"Mais, j'avais la conscience des éternités différentes de l'homme et de la femme"

- which might seem to lend a dimension of meaning to the text, the imagery is in fact, as we have said, a recreation of dream and therefore carries no level of meaning that is discernible to anyone other than a psychiatrist. The imagery of "Onirocritique" is, then, an entirely closed experience, whereas the imagery of "Les Fiançailles" is an open one. That is to say that in "Les Fiançailles" the images remain a medium, a greatly changed and liberated medium, but still a vehicle of communication although the communication really depends upon the liberty of the image. Thus the road which the poet explores in "Onirocritique" is largely a dead end, because it carries to its ultimate conclusion the freeing of the image, and leaves only the dimension of surprise. In creating the pristine world of the dream Apollinaire is fulfilling his boast - "J'émerveille", but he does not seem to have considered that the poet should be able to adopt the role of God to the extent that each of his creations should become an entirely new and unrelated universe. Thus "Les Fiançailles" represents in some ways a step back from the position of "Onirocritique" ; the poet now feeling that although each poem, each work, represents its own world, the experience which it gives us must in some way be related to our own lives. This is clearly seen in the later poems which he composed as we shall see in the following sections.

It must surely now be obvious that the progress accomplished by Apollinaire from "La Chanson" to the poems of 1907/8 entails a fully conscious development of what we call the techniques of violence. Where the rhythm and melody of the "Chanson" to some extent smooth the transition from one image or section to the next, the composition of the poems discussed in this chapter dispenses with these and indeed the impact of the poems depends upon the harshness and the unexpectedness of the juxtapositions. It is also very important to note that whereas love and various women do come into these poems in certain ways, one cannot compare these poems to any of Apollinaire's earlier love poetry ; their intentions and aspirations are quite different. So that we note that, as with the composition of "La Chanson", when Apollinaire needed to find a greater depth of expression, when his poetic range was being extended, he turned in a corresponding degree to the techniques of shock, of juxtaposition, rather than logical development, to violence - in other words to what was most original in himself.

CHAPTER TWO : SECTION FIVE

OTHER POEMS

In this section we shall deal with the remaining important poems in "Alcools" with the exception of "Zone" for reasons which we shall set out in section six of this chapter. This means that we shall be dealing with poems whose composition was spread out over a period of three years which marked Apollinaire's career as a writer and brought him into the public eye, not only in the way in which he would have desired but also as the alien accused of stealing the Mona Lisa from the Louvre. During this period also Apollinaire intrigued the readers of "Les Marges" by writing a column under the name of Louise Lalanne from January 1909 to January 1910. This and other amusements which he and his companions allowed themselves acquired for him the reputation of a member of a group primarily concerned with "mystification". Had he allowed this reputation to pass uncontested it might have done even more harm than it actually did. Apollinaire, never having been anything but a serious writer where his poetry was concerned, clearly had no desire to see his hard won new poetry dismissed in this fashion simply because it was not "le plus immédiatement accessible".

The extent to which Apollinaire established himself as a writer in this period may be seen from a list of his publications up to the year 1913. Beginning in 1909 he published "L'Enchanteur pourrissant", "L'Hérésiarque et cie.", "Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée", "Les Peintres cubistes" and "Alcools". Also during this period he helped to found and edit "Les Soirées de Paris", as well as writing his regular "La Vie anecdotique" for the "Mercur de France". To add to his notoriety he was known publicly

as the champion of the Cubists, even before the publication of his book, which in any case he intended to call "Méditations Esthétiques" as Marcel Adéma has shown.(1) But this public association with the Cubists did nothing for Apollinaire's reputation as a serious poet although he never abandoned his friends and was always ready to come to their aid. Many people have subsequently accused Apollinaire of jumping on the Cubist bandwagon and of purveying the ideas of men whose paintings he was incapable of understanding. It should be remembered that Apollinaire won himself far more enemies than friends by his defence of the Cubists and that he suffered many things which would probably never have happened to him had he not been known as their friend. Also, as early as 1907, he was insisting that there could be no relation between poetry and painting, so far was he from trying to climb to fame on the backs of his painter friends :

"Il n'y a pas de rapport de la littérature à la peinture, et je me suis efforcé de n'établir à cet égard aucune confusion." (2)

If we have gone to the trouble to state these things it is because we wish to show that Apollinaire was during this period, as in any other, writing poetry which was fundamentally his own, and which, although difficult, was not intended as either a joke or a literary imitation of cubism, both of which he has been accused of.

The poems which we shall be dealing with are "Cortège", "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon", "Vendémiaire", "Le Voyageur" and "Cours de Chasse". We shall be considering these poems as

(1) cf. Adéma (68), p. 214

(2) Chroniques d'Art, O.C., p. 84

continuing the techniques developed in "Les Fiançailles". We begin by examining "Cortège". (1)

"Oiseau tranquille au vol inverse oiseau
 Qui nidifie en l'air
 A la limite où notre sol brille déjà
 Baisse ta deuxième paupière la terre t'éblouit
 Quand tu lèves la tête"

The poem begins with an image which surpasses the limits of our visual imagination. If we are able to go as far as seeing a bird flying upside down we cannot follow the poet in the other details which he adds. It is almost certain that this is also true of Apollinaire's own visual imagination and therefore what he is describing to us here is a non-visual image entirely dependent upon language for its existence. Madame Durrty has spoken of an "inspiration verbale" and compared it to similar images called for by André Breton (2). But she also says, and we would agree with her, that if the image eludes us visually it does not entirely escape our imagination. This image seems to communicate directly with our subconscious mind. We seem to grasp the image yet we cannot visualise it. Here Apollinaire has achieved an image which is created by the words themselves ; he has endowed his language with a creative power which overcomes the barriers of rational comprehension ; he has achieved the perfect shock image.

The image thus implanted in the reader's mind, the poet changes rapidly the subject and uses the first person :

"Et moi aussi de près je suis sombre et terne"

(1) O.P., p. 74

(2) of Durrty, T.3, pp. 177-178

Not only the introduction of the "moi" but also the use of the word "aussi" come as a surprise to the reader. The poet is identifying himself with the bird, and as a man he is only something which gets in the way of the light :

"Une brume qui vient d'obscurcir les lanternes
 Une main qui tout à coup se pose devant les yeux
 Une voûte entre vous et toutes les lumières"

But he will not remain as a block in the way of the light ; he himself will become a source of light among the shadows :

"Et je m'éloignerai m'illuminant au milieu d'ombres
 Et d'alignements d'yeux des astres bien-aimés"

Once again the poet announces the theme of transformation of self. Through the new poetry he is becoming a giver of light to men. Thus we understand the poet to be saying that from close up, he looks just like any other man, but as a poet he launches himself through the imagination to the stars like a comet giving off a brilliant light.

The next verse is a repetition of the first with certain very significant changes which are very necessary to maintain the power of the image to surprise us. The first change in the wording is delayed as long as possible in order to increase our surprise ; in the third line the poet has changed the grammatical order so that the change in the subject is the last thing we notice in the line. And that change of subject assimilates the poet's memory to the earth ; but might we not ask whether the poet is not here using the word "mémoire" to mean that which is remembered rather than the faculty of memory?

We recall the images of the poems in the previous section in which the poet identified himself with the sun and moon. In addition

there is the line in the second verse beginning "Je m'éloignerai..." which suggests that the poet is leaving the earth behind and this is taken up again by the following lines of this stanza :

"Baisse ta deuxième paupière

Ni à cause du soleil ni à cause de la terre

Mais pour ce feu oblong dont l'intensité ira s'augmentant

Au point qu'il deviendra un jour l'unique lumière"

These lines assimilate the essence of the first two stanzas, so that now the bird is dazzled by neither the sun nor the reflecting earth, but by the luminous comet which is growing brighter and brighter and which is the poet, or perhaps, in keeping with the imagery of "Les Fiançailles", the poet's liberated imagination. The last line shows that the poet is no longer retained by fear, for he claims that the only light will eventually be himself, i.e. that he alone will be able to reveal things as they really are.

The details of the imagery of these lines border on the absurd - the idea of a bird nesting in the air and even the line "Baisse ta deuxième paupière" although there may well be some ornithological foundation for this. This does not, however, prevent the imagery from functioning on a serious level as we have already pointed out. This is part of the surprise, and Apollinaire was to accord it a place in his poetry in the same way as he did any other emotion :

"Nous avons vu depuis Alfred Jarry le rire s'élever des basses régions où il se tordait et fournir au poète un lyrisme tout neuf." (I)

It is also, of course, part of the strangeness of the image, which

(I) L'Esprit Nouveau, p. 14 (ed. 1948), also in O.C. t. 3.

is what lends it its power. We may say, then, that the whole of these three verses forming a first part of the poem exploit the techniques of violence in different ways, and depend upon them for their success. The "surreal" image, the abrupt change of tone and of person, the integration of the humorous into the essentially serious, all these factors are deliberately exploited and not simply for the purpose of surprising the reader, but to make a poem, unique in style and original in expression.

Although there is no separation of the sections as in "Les Fiançailles", there can be no doubt that the next lines represent a completely new departure. There is a change of tone to the tone of almost light-hearted banter :

"Un jour

Un jour je m'attendais moi-même

Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes"

We might almost have been reading a new poem, so different is this section from the preceding one. In spite of their light-hearted tone, however, these lines introduce a serious theme - the quest for identity, for self-knowledge that comes with maturity. The lines which follow develop the poet's knowledge of others, his powers of divination which allow him to know their nature and their future :

"Je les connais par les cinq sens et quelques autres

Il me suffit de voir leurs pieds pour pouvoir refaire ces

/gens à milliers

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

La monnaie des aveugles les mains des muets"

The effect of this variation is to prevent the idea arising that the poet is working towards any kind of a climax. The random choice

of detail, the variation of the emotive values of the details combine to prevent the building up of any suspense, so that then the claim which ends the list appears even more extravagant :

"Il me suffit de tous ceux-là pour me croire le droit
De ressusciter les autres"

This is the power of the poet! He can recreate reality from the tiniest and most banal details. He can resuscitate others, that is to say give to what is past and therefore a new life in his poetry.

This statement is followed by yet another surprise and one which reveals an essential part of Apollinaire's nature :

"Un jour je m'attendais moi-même
Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes
Et d'un lyrique pas s'avançaient ceux que j'aime"

By postponing the words "ceux que j'aime" to the last possible moment the poet allows the expectation to develop that it is his real self which he is about to introduce at this point, and therefore identifies those he loves with his real nature. The extent to which this was true of Apollinaire's character may be seen from this passage from Marcel Adéma's excellent biography :

"Il est de toutes les réunions, de tous les comités, entre autres avec Gide, Bouhéliier, Canudo et quelques autres du "Comité d'initiatives théâtrales" qui organise à l'Odéon des lectures de pièces d'auteurs nouveaux ; (. . . .) On le voit dans toutes les expositions, dans tous les cafés littéraires, aux dîners des revues, aux conférences de ses amis, à croire qu'il a reçu des fées le don d'ubiquité. Il disparaît parfois plusieurs jours sans qu'on sache ce qu'il est devenu, puis revient, toujours joyeux compagnon, disert, brillant, dissipant par son rire les reproches, entraînant

les uns et les autres chez Picasso, à la "Closerie", partout où il peut se sentir entouré, écouté, déplaçant sa déjà corpulente personne avec une surprenante vivacité." (1)

He was clearly a gregarious person who needed to be among friends, and who identified himself with his friends.

But the poet does not leave us with that simple impression of his nature, he was far too complex a person for that. The next line contradicts this impression which, there can be no doubt, he deliberately created :

"Parmi lesquels je n'étais pas"

The line surprises the reader, contradicts the previous ones, but does not destroy their effect. Apollinaire is giving an idea of the complexity of his personality by revealing these two conflicting aspects of it as conflicting truths. He did identify himself with his friends, but he was also himself and nobody else.

Possibly, also, the poet was not among the group of his friends because he was the whole group more than any one person in it. This is an interpretation which is in harmony with the theories of the "Unanimistes", the "poètes de l'Abbaye" with whose ideas Apollinaire felt a certain sympathy at this time (2).

There now begins a movement which is much more sustained and unified in tone than the preceding lines and which introduces a totally unexpected scheme of imagery :

"Les géants couverts d'algues passaient dans leurs villes
Sous-marines où les tours seules étaient des îles
Et cette mer avec les clartés de ses profondeurs
Coulait sang de mes veines et fait battre mon coeur"

(1) cf. Adéma (68), p. 155

(2) cf. Déc., p. 128, and also Adéma (68), pp. 159-160

After all the things and people which Apollinaire has enumerated in the lines 19-40 of the poem, it would be no great surprise to meet with giants ; but he is not content to introduce human giants, they are the giants of the sea bed, although the setting is such that they take on some semblance of human form in our imagination. Then the third and fourth lines quoted above again transform the scene, firstly by a paradox -

"Et cette mer avec les clartés de ses profondeurs"

- which to us in this age of undersea exploration and photography may conjure up a picture of oblique shafts of sunlight penetrating the sea-water, but to the readers of Apollinaire's day would not even have this contact with reality ; and secondly by transforming the whole image into a metaphor of the depths of the human consciousness :

"Coulait sang de mes veines et fait battre mon coeur"

We are suddenly once more in the presence of those disquieting creatures who invaded the consciousness of the poet in "Le Brasier":

"Des acteurs inhumains claires bêtes nouvelles" (1)

- and who personify the unknown elements of the subconscious mind which as we have seen the poet is prepared to face with much greater equanimity in "Les Collines" some eight or nine years later :

"Profondeurs de la conscience

On vous explorera demain

Et qui sait quels êtres vivants

Seront tirés de ces abîmes" (2)

Already in this image from "Cortège", Apollinaire is accepting the

(1) O.P., p. 110

(2) O.P., p. 172

presence of these creatures with much less fear than in "Le Brasier"! He is prepared to learn from them the language of his poetry - a language of much greater liberty than the traditional language of verse. The next lines reveal an image of mankind which, apart from the manifest associations which it has with the ideas of the "Unanimistes" also develops the idea that in the liberations of the unconscious mind, the depths of the human personality, lies the way to understanding between men ; and since this understanding between himself and others is what the poet seeks, he speaks the language of these strange peoples :

"Puis sur terre il venait mille peuplades blanches
Dont chaque homme tenait une rose à la main
Et le langage qu'ils inventaient en chemin
Je l'apppris de leur bouche et je le parle encore"

But as these peoples are parts of himself, in that they are the creatures of his imagination, the language that the poet speaks is that of a dialogue with himself ; and the clear object of any dialogue with oneself is self-knowledge. Thus, in finding out what one is, one is seeking knowledge of the future since the act of self-interrogation in contributing towards the formation of self and so the final answer is what one will be - from the point of view of the participants in the dialogue. And so the poet interweaves with the idea of knowledge through the liberation of the unconscious the idea of knowledge of the future. This is of paramount importance in our understanding of Apollinaire's poetic aims. It is clear in "Les Collines", not only in the lines already quoted -

"Profondeurs de la conscience
On vous explorera demain"

- which clearly link the two ideas, but also in many other verses in the poem such as the following :

"Voici le temps de la magie

Il s'en revient attendez-vous

A des milliards de prodiges

Qui n'ont fait naître aucune fable

Nul ne les ayant imaginés" (I)

Apollinaire's theories about the poetic imagination which invented the image towards the reality of which science struggled in the distant future (2) are here made an example of this theme. What can be brought forth in the form of images from the unconscious mind (and how close Apollinaire is here to the Freudian theories of the expressions of desires) will be images of the future since man will apply himself to the fulfilment of his desires ; and all that man creates by science which has not been foreseen by the poets is a failure on the part of the poets, for the future, for Apollinaire, is inescapably bound up with the buried parts of human nature.

We shall see how the poet develops this in the final verse of the poem, but for the moment we return to the next lines which continue to develop the image of the "cortège" which gives the poem its name :

"Le cortège passait et j'y cherchais mon corps

Tous ceux qui survenaient et n'étaient pas moi-même

Amenaient un à un les morceaux de moi-même

(I) O.P., p. 172

(2) cf. "L'Esprit Nouveau" - the poet's imagination created Icarus thousands of years before the scientist created the aeroplane, the scientific equivalent.

On me bâtit peu à peu comme on élève une tour
 Les peuples s'entassaient et je parus moi-même
 Qu'ont formé tous les corps et les choses humaines"

These lines make clear the fact that Apollinaire was not among the people of the procession, because he was the sum of them, which, while perfectly in keeping with unanimist ideas was also in keeping with Apollinaire's ideas about the relationship of the writer to the universe and to his imagination as he expressed it in "Les Fiançailles" and, indeed, is expressing it here. Whether one considers these people in the procession to be Apollinaire's friends or simply figments of his imagination, they are both aspects of himself, not only because they are human, but also because they fall within the sphere of his consciousness and so may be recreated by his imagination.

So we come to the two final verses of the poem, each a quatrain of alexandrines, and in these verses the poet speaks directly of his ideas on past and future and of his relationship to them :

"Temps passés Trépassés Les dieux qui me formâtes
 Je ne vis que passant ainsi que vous passâtes
 Et détournant mes yeux de ce vide avenir
 En moi-même je vois tout le passé grandir"

Much to our surprise we find ourselves faced with a volte-face on the part of the poet. He seems to be saying that he is the sum of what has happened to him, just as much now as he will be when dead. This leaves no room at all for the role of the imagination. Rather than someone who contains the potential future, he is the sum of History, of the development of mankind!

"Rien n'est mort que ce qui n'existe pas encore

Près du passé luisant demain est incolore
 Il est informe aussi près de ce qui parfait
 Présente tout ensemble et l'effort et l'effet"

The poet does not even seem to want to develop the role that the imagination would play in a reconstruction of the past! This is not an ending which is meant to shock us. It is not a final twist of the argument to finish on a note of surprise. In our opinion it is an ending composed later than the rest of the poem - it certainly is not present in the known manuscript versions (1) - and one which is intended to dismiss the poem which the poet no longer felt like continuing, partly because he was no longer interested in the unanimists' ideas and possibly also, because he had already achieved a complete poem along these lines in "Vendémiaire" which we shall also be dealing with in this section. How else can we regard an ending which is so far removed from the brilliant ideas and images with which the poem began ; an ending which in fact reminds us of the ending which he wrote for his version of "Salomé"! (2) We may also cite as evidence in support of our views the tone and language of these two verses which sound rather like a burlesque of the poetry of the nineteenth century dramatists, especially in the use of the second person plural of the preterite tense as a rhyme which underlines its ridiculously pompous sound. There is also the fact that the views expressed in these verses are totally out of keeping with the ideas of any of the other poems to be dealt with in this section or with those of the poems considered in the preceding section.

(1) cf. Déc., pp. 126-127

(2) cf. Ch.2, sec.3

It may perhaps be argued that here is another example of Apollinaire lacking the courage to carry to the fullest development the implications of his ideas concerning the subconscious and the role of the poet as a Mage and prophet, but we think it unlikely. It remains a mystery to us why a poem which begins on such a note of sublime shock to the consciousness of the reader, and which develops the use of violence as do "Les Fiançailles" and "Le Brasier", should end on such a note of banality both in its imagery and in its content. Unless as we have suggested the answer lies in Apollinaire's separating himself from the poets of the "Abbaye" group.

"Ce rapprochement vers "l'Unan^{im}isme" va être de courte durée, Apollinaire a trop d'originalité pour se plier à un dogmatisme d'école. (. . .) Il y aura bientôt des incidents, l'article d'Apollinaire attaquant "L'Armée dans la ville" et, plus tard, l'éreintement d'Alcools par Duhamel marqueront, définitivement, leur désaccord doctrinal . . . " (1)

"Cortège" was not published until November of 1912 (2) and it is possible that having failed to finish the poem at the time when he was most sympathetic towards the views of the unanimists, Apollinaire did not wish to continue the line of thought which he was developing in the poem, but did not wish to discard so effective and so brilliant a text, so wrote an ending to the poem which was intended as a tongue in cheek "exposé" of the unanimists' ideas.

In any case we have seen that that part of the poem which we consider to be most successful continues the exploitation of the

(1) cf. Adéma (68) p. 160

(2) cf. Déc., p. 124

techniques of violence which the poet developed in "Les Fiançailles" and so we pass on to the next poem which we wish to consider, namely "Vendémiaire" which with "Cortège", originally entitled "Brumaire", was to have been part of a sequence of poems on the theme of "L'Année Républicaine".

"Vendémiaire" opens on a note which recalls Villon's "Frères humains qui après nous vivez". :

"Hommes de l'avenir souvenez-vous de moi

Je vivais à l'époque où finissaient les rois" (I)

It is a beginning which could be seen as containing a certain literal truth at the time of the poem's composition. But it is also a beginning which associates Apollinaire with the kings, as he associated himself with the prophets in other poems. The kings are no ordinary mortals as we can see from line four :

"Et trois fois courageux devenaient trismégistes"

The poet does not seem simply to be referring to courage in the face of suffering giving strength ; the line has distinct overtones of magical powers and the poet seems to be claiming these for himself, as he has done in "Cortège" and other poems which we have analysed.

The next verse changes the tone to that of lyrical description and in the second line introduces the metaphor which is to form the basis of the poem :

"Que Paris était beau à la fin de septembre

Chaque nuit devenait une vigne où les pampres

Répandaient leur clarté sur la ville (et là-haut)"

The theme of the poem is a Dionysiac orgy in which the poet finds

communication with the entire universe. As in the above lines he transforms everything into vine, grape and then wine which he drinks so that he boasts towards the end of the poem :

"Je suis ivre d'avoir bu tout l'univers" (I)

The unanimist basis of the poem is clear, but what interests us principally is the extent to which the poet develops the imagery in terms of the techniques of violence in, say, the numerous metamorphoses which are present in the poem. If we take the lines from the second stanza quoted above as an example, we find them sadly lacking in force and much more traditional in nature than the images of "Les Fiançailles" or of most of "Cortège". To look more closely at the problem, we remark that the poet in the line -

"Chaque nuit devenait une vigne où les pampres"

- has used a word to link the objects, which are concerned in the metamorphosis, which destroys the potential element of surprise in the transformation in spite of the distance which separates the two terms. The use of the word "devenait" is what differentiates a metamorphosis such as this from the example discussed in the analysis of "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" :

"Un tout petit bouquet flottant à l'aventure

Couvrit l'Océan d'une immense floraison" (2)

The suddenness has been taken out of the transformation and this is what makes the image so acceptable in spite of the fact that it is difficult to think of a night as a vine. And so the assimilation of the "pampres" and the other details into the metaphor are also easily acceptable ; the image has lost its force!

(I) O.P., p. 154

(2) O.P., p. 106

Further on we find the lines -

"J'ai soif villes de France et d'Europe et du monde
Venez toutes couler dans ma gorge profonde"

- which by virtue of its Gargantuan scale does retain something of the power to surprise the reader, but is still very weak in comparison with lines such as :

"Les géants couverts d'algues passaient dans leurs villes
Sous-marines où les tours seules étaient des îles"

We cannot escape the conclusion that the poet by introducing his potentially very surprising basic metaphor in a non-violent fashion has lost most of his power to astonish the reader, so that even a line such as -

"Ces grains miraculeux qui aux treilles chantèrent"

- which would not have been out of place in "Onirocritique", is considerably weakened in its effect because it is simply a part of the general image of the poem. This consideration enables us to underline the importance of the surprise image, such as those discussed in "Le Brasier" -

"Nous attendons ton bon plaisir ô mon amie

J'ose à peine regarder la divine mascarade

Quand bleuira sur l'horizon la Désirade" (I)

- the principal function of which is simply to surprise the reader, to maintain his astonishment. In the case of "Vendémiaire" one has only to announce the theme of the poem and the nature of most of the imagery follows automatically from there. This is not at all true of a poem such as "Les Fiançailles", or even of "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé". That is not to say that "Vendémiaire" does not have

its surprises, but seen in its place in the perspective of the development of Apollinaire's poetry, it seems as though, having used the techniques of violence as a crowbar to prise apart the well cemented traditional relationships of the components of poetry, Apollinaire was content, in writing this poem, to revert to an only slightly loosened poetic structure.

Such elements of violence as there are in the poem, and many of these find very close parallels in poems such as "Zone" and "Les Fiançailles" where they are exploited to their fullest extent, are very much underplayed :

"Les métalliques saints de nos saintes usines" (I)

- this line is an example of the type of image to be used to such great effect in "Zone", and in fact the passage from which it is taken is developed in a way very similar to the section of "Zone" beginning :

"Et changé en oiseau ce siècle comme Jésus monte dans l'air"

There is a mingling of modern, mythical and almost blasphemous imagery in each. Let us consider the passage from "Vendémiaire" in detail :

"O Paris nous voici boissons vivantes

Les viriles cités où dégoisent et chantent

Les métalliques saints de nos saintes usines

Nos cheminées à ciel ouvert engrossent les nuées

Comme fit autrefois l'Ixion mécanique

Et nos mains innombrables

Usines manufactures fabriques mains

Où les ouvriers nus semblables à nos doigts

Fabriquent du réel à tant par heure

Nous te donnons tout cela

Et Lyon répondit tandis que les anges de Fourvières

Tissaient un ciel nouveau avec la soie des prières" (I)

The passage begins on a note of defiant modernism typical of the poetry of the industrial city, but also typical of Apollinaire in that he chooses to introduce the religious comparison. This is followed by the phallic image of the factory chimneys which provoke the comparison with a mechanical Ixion (who fathered the centaurs in attempting to rape Hera who transformed herself into a cloud). In these lines we have many of the elements of Apollinaire's shock tactics - the mixing of modern and mythical imagery, the sexual metaphor in an almost gratuitous context, the introduction of religious imagery in a near-blasphemous context, all these are familiar or soon-to-be-familiar elements of his poetry. Their effect here is to create an island of shock and surprise which radically modifies our impression of the poem so far. We are not impressed by the image of the city as something which the poet will consume, but by the surprising nature of the images themselves, - they rise out of their context to become almost a short lyric on the modern city in their own right and in a style typical of Apollinaire.

Then the lines "Et nos mains . . ." to "Fabriquent du réel . . ." add a new dimension to the passage. The human and mechanical elements are all confused and melt into one another in the line -

"Usines manufactures fabriques mains"

- and this is achieved by the simple expedient of abolishing the

punctuation. ("Vendémiaire" was the first poem which Apollinaire published without punctuation so that this state of the poem is previous to its publication in "Alcools"). (I)

In the next line we are completely surprised by the adjective "nus" applied to the workers and the comparison of them to fingers. The poet is maintaining the image-complex of human, industrial and sexual components which he has established in the opening lines of the passage, while at the same time continuing to surprise us. Why are the workers naked? Why are they like our fingers? There are certain political interpretations of these lines which would not only be possible but obvious in the work of a marxist poet ; yet these interpretations are just as obviously impossible in the context of Apollinaire's poetry. We cannot, of course, supply any direct answer to the questions. All we can do is remark that the effect of the imagery is to create a comparison between the industrial energy of the city and the sexual drive of the human beings. (There is an interesting parallel here to Apollinaire's comparison of war to the "terrible amour des peuples", but this will be discussed later in the relevant section of "Calligrammes").

And so the passage ends on a note of irony with the words - "La soie des prières" which cannot possibly be taken as a serious image in its religious implications, but which must rather be seen as a humorous extension to the religious parallel of the third line of the passage. In this passage, then, we have the use of the techniques of violence with an efficacy that is only tempered by the fact that they appear grafted on to the poem as a

whole. They are indeed an excellent example of Apollinaire's awareness of the complexity of modern man and his environment and are not irrelevant to the poem as a whole, yet we feel that when they are seen in the context of the entire poem, they represent a passage whose promise has not been fulfilled in most of the rest of the poem. Indeed the line -

"Fabriquent du réel à tant par heure"

- introduces the possibility of the same kind of discussion of the mechanistic nature of reality compared to the suppleness of the worlds of the imagination such as they are embodied in the imagery of the passage, yet this remains as an implication rather than as a developed aspect of the passage.

Let us compare the next passage with the one which we have just analysed :

"Désaltère-toi Paris avec les divines paroles
Que mes lèvres le Rhône et la Saône murmurent
Toujours le même culte de sa mort renaissant
Divise ici les saints et fait pleuvoir le sang
Heureuse pluie 8 gouttes tièdes 8 douleur
Un enfant regarde les fenêtres s'ouvrir
Et des grappes de têtes à d'ivres oiseaux s'offrir"

The comparison of the second line fails to surprise us because it is part of the general image of the poem. It does not impress us in the way in which the image of the poet as a sun burning between two nebula does in "Les Fiançailles" (1) The paradox created by the word order in the third line appears forced and the image of the rain of blood in the next is hackneyed. As to the image of the

(1) O.P., p. 130

final line, it compares very badly with similar images in "Les Fiançailles" and, as we shall see, in "Zone". (I)

Where the scale of the imagery and the terrible thirst of the poetic imagination really do begin to impress us is in the final lines of the poem :

"Mondes qui vous ressemblent et qui nous ressemblent

Je vous ai bus et ne fus pas désaltéré

Mais j'ai connu dès lors quelle saveur à l'univers"

We find more conviction in these lines than in most of the rest of the poem, which is fitting for a climax, in a way, but reflects badly on the poem as a whole. The power of these lines seems, to us, to spring from the idea of the worlds "made" in the image of someone. In this line we rejoin the anthropomorphic concept of the mind's experience of external reality that is present in the penultimate section of "Cortège". We find ourselves faced with the consideration of the poet's ability to absorb the external world and, by implication his ability to recreate it imaginatively. This is unfortunately absent from most of the poem, with the noticeable exception of the passage on the "villes du Nord" which is analysed above.

Whatever our conclusions about the success or failure of "Vendémiaire", it is obvious that it exploits to a much lesser degree the techniques of violence developed in "Les Fiançailles" and used in the other poems which we shall now analyse.

We pass on now to an examination of the "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon". The poem begins with a curious negative construct-

(I) "Les Fiançailles": "Il vit décapité sa tête est le soleil

Et la lune son cou tranché" (O.P. p.132)

"Zone": "Soleil cou coupé" (O.P. p. 44)

-ion, (I) the effect of which is to establish the statements which the poet first wishes to parade before us, then to deny. There is no great degree of surprise involved in this construction, a fairly common rhetorical device, but the statement which really interests us, what the poet did say to himself, is postponed as long as possible thanks to this construction ; and as the intervening possible statements present a certain gamut of possible reactions to the situation, all of which are by no means banal, the final appearance of the line which continues the opening statement appears as the climax to a long cheer, or acclamation being by virtue of its content a very agreeable surprise.

It is typical of Apollinaire that he should insert into his list of possible reactions to the sight of Paris draped in flags a line such as :

"Ni les maisons flambent parce qu'on partira pour ne plus
/revenir"

- which is a sudden and unexpected association of the colours of the flags with the colours of flames followed by an explanation which is not at all a likely one to spring to mind at the sight of the decorations ; in other words the image is a shock image, used purely to upset the reader's forming expectations.

This is also true of the line -

"Ni même on a pendu ceux qui ne savaient pas profiter de la vie"

- which, given that the context of the celebrations is announced in the title of the poem, is an even less likely thought. These images and the others in this opening sequence are in some ways

a justification of the claim which Apollinaire makes in the tenth line -

"Je sais que seuls le renouvellent ceux qui sont fondés en
/poésie"

- in that they are re-presentations of the same scene through the imagination of the poet, while we the readers know from the beginning the reason for the flags and bunting being hung out.

There is no great degree of violence, or even simple surprise in this opening passage, but there is the exposition, indicated above, which is the rationale of the techniques of violence that the poet has evolved. This is developed in the second part of the poem, in which Apollinaire reveals a basic part of his technique. The description of himself and Salmon in what was undoubtedly the cellar where the "Soirées de la Plume" were held takes on a special significance in the line -

"Epris épris des mêmes paroles dont il faudra changer le sens"
- in which Apollinaire looks back not only on their youth but also on their belief in a poetry which is no longer valid, indeed a belief in a language which is no longer valid. The way out of their dilemma is through laughter, but also through a rejection of banal reality :

"Trompés trompés pauvres petits et ne sachant pas encore rire
La table et les deux verres devinrent un mourant qui nous jeta
le dernier regard d'Orphée
Les verres tombèrent se brisèrent
Et nous apprîmes à rire"

The apparent humour of the line describing the demise of the table and glasses does not conceal its very serious content - reality, for the poet, is dead. And humour has found its rightful place in

poetry which is also serious poetry. From this point the next passage follows, for its contents not only illustrate the charm and fantasy of Salmon's poetry, on which Apollinaire wrote at length in an article published in "Vers et Prose", a few months before the composition of this poem, (I) they are also illustrations of what poetry finds "à travers la raison", that is to say they are "surreal" images.

Apollinaire's recreation of the Shakespearian scene is none the less moving for being fantastical :

"Je le revis au bord du fleuve sur lequel flottait Ophélie
 Qui blanche flotte encore entre les nénuphars
 Il s'en allait au milieu des Hamlets blafards
 Sur la flûte jouant les airs de la folie"

In fact the point which Apollinaire wishes to make is that the image, which is detached from reality, is its own reality and through the repetitions of pallor "blanche . . . nénuphars . . . blafards", allied to the combination of death and madness, which are both understated, (Ophelia is still floating and Hamlet's madness is translated by the melancholy music of the flute), the poet creates a very unreal image which despite its unreality conveys the truth of the situation. Thus while we do not feel the image to be violent, in spite of its ignoring the laws of the universe which we know, we do see this image as depending on the same ideas as the techniques of violence ; but perhaps because Apollinaire wished to create something light, in the style of his friend, he has avoided the stronger turn which his own imagery was taking at this time.

Now comes the fourth and final passage of the poem in which

(I) "Vers et Prose", juin-août 1908 ; O.C. t.3, p. 822

Apollinaire takes up again the negative construction which he employed in the first. As in the first section the negative construction is in no way meant to modify the truth of any of the statements which the poet is making, although the line -

"Ni parce que nous avons tant grandi que beaucoup pourraient
/confondre

nos yeux et les étoiles"

- may be taken ironically, when we think of "Les Fiançailles"!

The poet repeats his statement about the powers of poets which leaves us in no doubt that he has retained the poetic ambitions which are apparent in the poems discussed in the last section -

"Ni parce que fondés en poésie nous avons des droits sur les
paroles qui forment et défont l'Univers"

- and which also makes clear to us his preoccupation with the power of language. In fact this line might be seen as an explanation of the image which opens "Cortège".

In conclusion we may say that this poem provides us with more evidence of Apollinaire's thoughts at this period than of actual images, but as we have shown his ideas here are consistent with the use of violence as a literary device. This poem also reveals Apollinaire's concern with reconsidering his past in terms of something from which he now feels himself to be completely separated. To the experience of "Les Fiançailles" is added a new confidence which is apparent in this poem. It is also interesting to note, in passing, that at this time he dedicated a copy of his prose work "L'Enchanteur Pourrissant" with this verse -

"A mon ami Jean Sève

Auquel j'ai lu pour la première fois

L'Enchanteur en 1900. Il était le premier

A qui je confiais mes idées

Personne ne connut ce testament

De ma première esthétique avant lui" (1)

- a further indication that Apollinaire felt that he had achieved the break with the old style of writing that is the source of the tension in "Les Fiançailles". In comparison the calm and restrained style of the "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon" points to a considerable increase in his confidence.

We now turn to "Le Voyageur" (2) which is a much richer source of images relevant to our discussion of violence. In this poem Apollinaire returns to the techniques of violence to such an extent that the poem is incomprehensible to those who are not prepared to follow him in his liberation of the image.

The poem begins with an isolated line -

"Ouvrez-moi cette porte où je frappe en pleurant"

- which straightaway brings the inevitable unanswered question - which door? We may reflect that the title should offer some illumination here - the traveller is knocking on a door which clearly will not open for him. He is shut out, but from what? No answer is given to us, certainly not in the next line -

"La vie est variable aussi bien que l'Euripe"

- which again is isolated. But there must be some connection between these two lines, otherwise they would not have been placed one after the other. Apollinaire is using the technique of juxtaposition to create a link which lies beyond the province of logical connection, while at the same time using the space between the lines to set each

(1) cf. Adéma (68) p. 162

(2) O.P., p. 78

down as a statement whole in itself. The reference to the Euripe if somewhat learned does not really obscure the meaning of the line - the fact that it is a stretch of tidal water in which there are as many as fourteen changes of direction in a period of twenty-four hours may not be at our fingertips, and so we may lose some of the force of the image, but the image gains in mystery while retaining the sense of something that is greatly and frequently variable through a kind of reversal of the comparison, by which the variety of life is transferred to the other term.

The poet has deliberately severed these two first lines from all connection with logic, has deliberately deprived them of any introduction which might make them more comprehensible, in order to give them a maximum of force in their action on the reader's mind. Out of their juxtaposition arises the understanding that the door which is closed to the traveller is the one which shields the key to life, which in its variety is incomprehensible as a whole and so must be accepted in its instantaneous nature, however much desire the traveller, who is, of course, the poet in this case, but in fact anyone living as well, may have to discover the pattern which links all the disparate elements which go to make it up. This is consistent with the thought expressed in "Les Fiançailles", not only in the concept of poetry that is put forward in the manuscript, deleted in all probability because it was too direct and explicit :

"Puis j'ai reconnu que chaque moment porte en soi sa propre
/perfection"

This is also the rationale of "Le Voyageur", both in its imagery and its form, for what Madame Durry has called the "Leitmotiv du souvenir" (I) is, as we shall see, a series of memories

(I) cf. Durry, t.3, p. 149

which are juxtaposed without logical connection in the poem, each being a moment in its own right, to be accepted as such, and yet also making us feel the need to find the connection which ties it to the others (a connection which is suggested by the juxtaposition) now that the purely sequential link of time has been removed by the simultaneous existence accorded to them by memory. But, the opening lines are there to mock us. The door will not be opened, we shall not find the key and the only pattern discernible is the pattern imposed by the poem which is in itself an echo of the seemingly disconnected sequence of the events we live.

Thus the next lines break with the first two and present us with an image which we may interpret in terms of Apollinaire's life, but which still presents an enigmatic face to us as we cannot resolve its relationship to the other images of the poem except in the terms already mentioned (I) :

"Tu regardais un banc de nuages descendre
Avec le paquebot orphelin vers les fièvres futures
Et de tous ces regrets de tous ces repentirs
Te souviens-tu" (2)

If we interpret the "paquebot orphelin" as being Apollinaire himself as a child, and the "fièvres futures" as the various intoxications of his subsequent existence, what do we make of the clouds?

(I) We are reminded here of the lines from "Le Brasier" :

"Et le troupeau de sphinx regagne la sphingerie.

A petits pas Il orra le chant du pâtre toute la vie"

- the poet/sphinx-herd is parading his mysteries before us and then returning them unsolved to the fold.

(2) O.P., p. 78

Are they not just the image of that very element of mystery which we cannot penetrate? The poet is maintaining the element of mystery and surprise.

There is perhaps a tenuous connection with the next passage, in that it too is concerned with images from a sea voyage, but such is the surreal quality of these lines that we are in no doubt that we are confronted by a totally different memory :

"Vagues poissons arqués fleurs surmarines

Une nuit c'était la mer

Et les fleuves s'y répandaient"

The first line may be seen as traditional metaphors linking the objects named through their physical similarities, waves being the common term, but the suppression of any connecting words or even punctuation greatly increases the power of the images. This presentation of the image acts as a build-up to the mysterious and powerfully evocative image in the next two lines ; in simply enumerating the elements of the image in the first line the poet is involving the reader in them much more ; he is creating a total atmosphere from them and then plunging the reader into the profundity of the next image. Sea and night are united to create an environment of which each is part but neither is the whole, and in this environment we are aware of the various currents that are the rivers flowing into the sea, which might well be a symbol of memories creating the illusion of continuity through the direction they have, yet there are more than one, therefore there is no clear direction ; but we cannot explain what they are ; the image surpasses our conscious understanding of it. Perhaps it is the unconscious mind itself, the source of the poetic image ; in which case there is a significant confrontation to be made with the image

from "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" -

"Un tout petit bouquet flottant à l'aventure

Couvrit l'Océan d'une immense floraison" (I)

- and the "Vagues - - - fleurs surmarines". The transformation in each case springs from a total involvement with the sea on the part of the poet, if, that is, the sea/night represents the unconscious mind. Thus the waves and flowers are visible on the surface, but the connection lies in the depths, the unconscious, of which we are aware but which we cannot fathom. This is a clear demonstration of the indivisibility of form and content in this kind of poetry which Apollinaire is creating.

The next line situates the image as a memory, but there is a change of person, the "tu" present at the end of the last passage becoming "je". This serves to underline the apparent lack of connection between the images and the events in the poet's mind, but as we cannot fail to see that they both refer to the same person, the fact that a connection exists is also brought out ; but again the sequential identity that would be conferred by a belief in continuing time being the important link, is denied. That is to say there is a simultaneous existence of past and present in the poem, the sum of which is the traveller ; but how, or why this identity is established is the mystery we cannot solve.

The next passage begins with a temporal designation which makes it clear that it is a memory, and with a verb of motion that is consistent with the poem's basic metaphor of a journey (in fact the most basic metaphor in literature, and here given a new twist by the destruction of the normal sequence of time and by the

possibility of the reversal of that sequence implied in the image of the directional changes of the tidal waters). There are also certain elements in the description which are undeniably present in order to surprise the reader, to transform the scene from an ordinary one into one which has special significance for the poet (perhaps) and mystery and shock for the reader :

"Un soir je descendis dans une auberge triste"

Après de Luxembourg"

The beginning might allow us to think of somewhere we know, to impose on the image our own memory or imagined scene ; but this is impossible after the next line :

"Dans le fond de la salle il s'envolait un Christ"

The similarity of a Christ with outspread arms to a bird with outspread wings may eventually dawn upon us, but there can be no doubt that the poet has chosen this description not to reveal any link between the two, but to shock us. Once again the poet has chosen to use a religious image in a near blasphemous manner as a source of shock. (This image is also a clear forerunner of a whole passage in "Zone" which we shall examine in the next section.)

There is also the presence of the ferret and the hedgehog in the next two lines which we find slightly disconcerting, and which definitely situate the image outside our own memories, as does the final line of the passage :

"Et toi tu m'avais oublié"

Is this the "tu" mentioned earlier, the poet? Is it a woman who loved him? Characteristically there is no answer, the detail remains mysterious. But it contributes to the strange sad note of this scene. It also serves as a deliberate contrast with the first line of the next passage -

"Te souviens-tu du long orphelinat des gares"

- which again contributes to the imagery of travel. It would not be too difficult to find a whole series of episodes and incidents in Apollinaire's life to which these "memories" could be said to correspond, but it seems to us that the important thing is not to show the real incidents which lie behind the images in the poem, for if these images are not convincing in their own right then the poem is a complete failure. Therefore we consider it sufficient to indicate that certain of the details in the poem are undeniably autobiographical, and the others probably so. The crucial matter is whether or not the reader has grasped that the poem is a series of memories and that the justification for their juxtaposition is that they are the fragments of experience which the mind recalls in defiance of temporal order and comprehensible pattern. Therefore the traveller is the poet not only in the sense that most of the memories are concerned with journeys he has made, but also because he is travelling in time, in reaching back into the past in which these memories exist.

The poet's objective then, must be to make the reader feel these memories as he does, vividly but incomprehensibly connected. To do this he is exploiting the techniques of violence, not only to cause surprise, but also to force the reader to accept these images as they are set out and not as he may modify them in terms of his own experience; in other words he is ignoring altogether the idea of asking the reader to suspend his disbelief and instead forcing the experience on him. This is the function of the unreal or unlikely details such as :

"Nous traversâmes des villes qui tout le jour tournaient

Et vomissaient la nuit le soleil des journées"

The poet is not attempting to find a vivid way of saying something he remembers so that it may appear poetic ; he is trying to destroy the connections between his images and the reader's experience of reality.

This passage ends on a very strange call by the poet :

"O matelots & femmes sombres et vous mes compagnons
Souvenez-vous-en"

Who are the people whom he mentions in these lines? In an earlier section we have already discussed the idea that the image of the sailors was associated in Apollinaire's mind with the image of himself and his younger brother on their travels round France, Italy and Belgium, but to what extent is this apparent in the poem to the reader with no knowledge of the facts of Apollinaire's life? Clearly the reader cannot be at all aware of the existence of a younger brother, there is nothing in the poem to suggest this to him. But in the "Nous traversâmes" of this passage he is told quite clearly that the poet is not alone. This is not enough, however, to make him identify the poet with the "matelots", but the next passage is effective enough to make him feel this, even if at the end of this passage the sailors are seen simply as part of the imagery of travel.

Who then are the "femmes sombres"? They are exactly what the poet describes them as, shadowy creatures, inhabitants of the domain of memory. And the poet's companions? Who else but the readers of his poem. Thus the poet is telling us to remember, to experience as he does the memories, the fragments of a life which he has set out for us in such a way that we must "remember" them as though they were our own memories, but intact, as the poet remembers them and not changed by our own experiences.

"Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais quittés

Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais parlé"

The first line gives a poignant picture of inseparable companions, the second brings an astonishing modification. But in the moment we read that first line we cannot escape the idea that the poet is one of the two sailors. There is no logical reason for this, it seems to us that it arises from the juxtaposition of the two passages. As an image of companionship, the image is too immediate and too deeply felt not to be the poet's own experience. But what are we to make of the second line? We cannot interpret it rationally - it imposes on the idea of the two inseparable companions the feeling that the bond which held them together is strong enough to do so in spite of their inability to communicate to each other. (The great difference in the characters of Apollinaire and his brother spring to mind as does the fact that they underwent together all the vicissitudes of their childhood and youth.) This mute bond which holds the sailors together must surely be something very strong. We might hazard a guess that it is a blood relationship, but this is not a full explanation by any means. Once again the poet is creating a deliberately mysterious image. The next line goes even further :

"Le plus jeune en mourant tomba sur le côté"

The description might be that of a falling statue! Once more we are faced with an image which we cannot explain rationally, but which takes us by surprise and leaves an inescapable impression on our minds - the death is not necessarily a real one, the younger sailor has become for the other an inert and lifeless thing which simply keels over on its side. The image of companionship is now shattered. The memory is tinged with bitterness.

There follows an evocation of remembered details which are unconnected but which accumulate to give the picture of the last line of the passage -

"Les villes que j'ai vues vivaient comme des folles"

- although the poet is not simply seeking to present a memory-image, he is again exploiting the possibilities of surprise which can arise from the juxtaposition of two contrasting elements :

"Sonneries électriques des gares chant des moissonneuses"

The shock which we receive from the justification of the harsh sound of the electric bells and the song of the reapers (it is highly unlikely that the "moissonneuses" are mechanical reapers, given the date of the poem) reminds us of the kaleidoscopic nature of memory. Unrelated images are brought together so that we feel there is some link, but we cannot find it.

There is also the strange description of the bridges -

"Cavalerie des ponts . . ."

- which is clearly intended to take the reader by surprise, as it takes a simple visual element and translates it into a whole image of hustle and bustle . (I) In this, this image is very similar to the opening image of "Zone" in which the poet has selected a minor visual aspect of the scene in order to give a whole new interpretation of it. This is also true of the line :

"Te souviens-tu des banlieues et du troupeau plaintif des
/paysages"

The poet is using the surprise image as a weapon to prevent the reader assimilating the details he remembers to similar details in

(I) All the details in this passage are present in "Zone" where their effect is similar.

his own experience, even if the reader does gather a certain general impression.

The next four verses, quatrains of regular, rhymed alexandrines are taken from a previously composed and unfinished draft of another poem (I). There is a complete change of tone and atmosphere in these verses ; they have a dreamlike quality :

"Les cyprès projetaient sous la lune leurs ombres
J'écoutais cette nuit au déclin de l'été
Un oiseau langoureux et toujours irrité
Et le bruit éternel d'un fleuve large et sombre"

There is a soothing music in these lines and a lengthening effect leading to an opening vista (of the eternal) which shows how well Apollinaire could exploit the regular metres and put this to good effect in a "vers libre" composition. If the element of mystery is still present in the line -

"Un oiseau langoureux et toujours irrité"

- the element of surprise has disappeared except for the surprise we feel on being faced with the transition from the previous passage to this dream-like one. The development of the scene over the four stanzas offers us no clue as to its meaning. The mystery deepens with each verse and in particular with the third :

"Alors sans bruit sans qu'on pût voir rien de vivant
Contre le mont passèrent des ombres vivaces
De profil ou soudain tournant leurs vagues faces
Et tenant l'ombre de leurs lances en avant"

We are dealing here with another kind of unreality, with a world of dreams that reminds us of Plato's example of the man who spends

(I) cf. Déc., p. 106

his life chained between a fire and a wall of a cave on which are thrown the shadows of people who pass between him and the fire but whom he never sees, so that his ideas of reality are conditioned by his experience, in which shadows are more real than people. Within these verses these shadows are as real as any other people who appear in the poem, and just as mysterious. Thus, firstly by preserving the secret of these dream images and secondly by imparting to them the same sadness which permeates the images of remembered reality; the poet is equating the two existences which he has in this poem, the existence within the world of dreams and the existence in the real world, from neither of which can he draw a coherent pattern which explains the whole of existence. The sadness of the world of dreams is made crystal clear in the fourth of the verses written in alexandrines :

"Et ces ombres barbues pleuraient humainement"

The shadows weep as humanly as real people, as does the poet knocking on the door behind which lies the key to the diversity of experience. The arbitrary nature of the experience of dreams is also shown to be identical to that of memory -

"Les ombres contre le mont perpendiculaire

Grandissaient ou parfois s'abaissaient brusquement"

- sometimes the images are large and clear, sometimes small and indistinct.

The comparison which we made with the Platonic image was not just an arbitrary memory ; it seems to us that the implications of this poem and the nature of the shock image itself all run counter to the idea that there is a truth, Platonic or other, which lies behind perceptible reality, and to which we may aspire. The sadness of the dream-figures, the sadness of the memories, the sadness of

the poet all stem from the fact that our apprehensions of reality are fragmentary and remain so in spite of memory which provides an extra dimension of experience for us.(1) Therefore, we ourselves are fragmentary beings, living from one moment to the next with no guarantee of continuity, and the fragments of the past which memory preserves for us do not succeed in making us continuous since memory is also fragmentary and only seems to establish a continuity, as do the images of this poem but we cannot penetrate to that continuity ; it too is behind the door. Before continuing our analysis of this poem we should like to examine certain images in Apollinaire's poetry which refer to memory. Apollinaire saw memory as a rag-bag of recollections without either rhyme or reason:

"Ils forment aussi des crochets et l'on y suspend mille choses
Comme on fait à la mémoire" (2)

- true, there is nothing original or unusual in this, but among these recollections were some which suddenly come to life with great visual intensity :

"Soudain
Rapide comme ma mémoire
Les yeux se rallumèrent" (3)

Finally the arbitrary nature of the associations made by nature and the subconscious mind are clearly seen in this quotation -

"Des musettes bleues des casques bleus des cravates bleues
des vareuses bleues
Moceaux du ciel tissus des souvenirs les plus purs" (4)

(1) cf. Ch.2, sec.4, pp.126-128

(2) "Le Palais du Tonnerre", O.P., p. 254

(3) "La Maison des Morts", O.P., p. 66

(4) "Le Palais du Tonnerre", O.P., p. 255

- and of course in the famous image from "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé" in which it is compared to a storm-tossed boat :

"Mon beau navire & ma mémoire
Avons-nous assez navigué
Dans une onde mauvaise à boire
Avons-nous assez divagué
De la belle aube au triste soir" (1)

In the light of these examples there can be no doubt as to Apollinaire's conviction of the fragmentary and arbitrary nature of remembered experience. Therefore we may say that Apollinaire's shadowy figures, like his imagery, are diametrically opposed to the Platonic concept of the universe ; and it should also be obvious that the shock image and the technique of juxtaposition are ideally suited to the expression of Apollinaire's ideas.

To return to the final lines of "Le Voyageur", then, we find that the idea of discontinuity of personality is expressed in the line :

"Qui donc reconnais-tu sur ces vieilles photographies"
Whoever is to be seen on the photographs which the poet is considering, whether it be himself as a child, as M. Décaudin suggests (2), or someone else, the poet can still recognise none, since the subject of the photograph has changed and memory cannot ensure the continuity of that person's existence. Thus the question of the next line, needs to be reinforced by an insistence, "Do you remember . . ., you do remember . . ." :

"Te souviens-tu du jour où une abeille tomba dans le feu

(1) O.P., p. 47

(2) cf. Déc., p. 133

C'était tu t'en souviens à la fin de l'été"

The poet now re-introduces the image of the two sailors, perhaps the description of them here is what is before him on the photograph, in any case the poet renders the image very concrete by the inclusion of two simple details :

"L'aîné portait au cou une chaîne de fer

Le plus jeune mettait ses cheveux blonds en tresse"

The effect of this is to impart to the image a clear definition which would then seem to contradict the idea that memory cannot provide a strong enough link with the past, but these lines are followed by the repetition of the two opening lines of the poem, this time in reversed order. Thus the frustration of the traveller is re-affirmed, he remains outside the door, and the poem ends on the statement :

"La vie est variable aussi bien que l'Euripe"

It seems to us fair to say that the theme of this poem lies as much in the spaces in between the lines as it does in the lines themselves ; that is to say that the discontinuity of the technique expresses the discontinuity of human experience. Therefore the success of the poem depends upon the violence of its form, and the violence, or surprise of its content, and this to a greater extent than perhaps any other poem we have considered so far except "Les Fiançailles".

We now propose to examine two other poems of the period in order to show to what extent Apollinaire had developed the techniques of violence during this period. The first of these, "1909", we shall show, depends entirely upon these techniques for its existence as a poem. The second, "Cours de Chasse", we propose to compare with an earlier short lyric, "La Tzigane", in order to

show quite clearly the difference made by the techniques of violence to a poem written on a fairly similar theme to the early lyric, which we have already shown owes only very little to these techniques. (1)

The poem "I909" (2) falls neatly into two parts, the first of which is a description, light in tone, of a pretty, fashionably-dressed woman of whom the poet says :

"Elle était si belle

Que tu n'aurais pas osé l'aimer"

This description, with some repetitions, fills four verses after the third of which is inserted the isolated line :

"N'entendra-t-on jamais sonner minuit"

There is no apparent explanation for this line, it does not have any apparent link with the description which surrounds it.

The second half of the poem is in complete contrast to the first in all respects. To the description of the beautiful young lady is opposed the line :

"J'aimais les femmes atroces dans les quartiers énormes"

and there follows an evocation of the vitality of the industrial city and its inhabitants which is taken from a draft of the poem "Vendémiaire" (3). After this the poet closes with the lines :

"Cette femme était si belle

Qu'elle me faisait peur"

This is the whole of the poem. We can find no meaning on the surface, but the structure of the poem is such that the meaning arises

(1) cf. Ch.2, sec.I

(2) O.P., p. 138

(3) cf. Déc., p. 210

from the opposition of the images. The violent difference that exists between the first and second halves of the poem is what gives meaning to the poem ; and the poet, in preferring the second to the first image, is saying that his poetry must be inspired from the new beauty of the industrial world. Everything depends on the confrontation, the juxtaposing of the two contradictory images (the beautiful lady that the poet is afraid to love and the "femmes atroces") which is, of course, one of the basic techniques of violence that the poet had developed. (1)

A premonitory note of the contrast is to be found in the line:

"N'entendra-t-on jamais sonner minuit"

- which, it has been suggested, (2), is meant to convey to the reader that the young woman is Cinderella and that she will be dressed in rags at midnight, so that the beauty of the description is a false beauty. This may be true, but should the reader fail to make this association in his mind, the effect of the line is to surprise him and to make him feel uneasy in the presence of this description. The line does carry the suggestion that at midnight something important will happen, and for the moment the description of the young woman lies between the reader and the revelation of what this is. This again is in perfect conformity with the techniques of violence as we have defined them and shown them in operation in Apollinaire's poetry.

We now pass on to a consideration of the poem "Cors de

(1) For a similar interpretation see M. Décaudin : *Obscurité et composition chez Apollinaire - Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises*, March, 1963, no. 15, pp. 119-125.

(2) Ibid. p. 125

Chasse" (I). This poem consists of two verses of five lines each and a final couplet. There is no apparent link between either of the verses and the couplet, or between the verses themselves. Only the title seems connected to the final couplet, that is, logically. In fact the poem is an integrated whole in which the relationship of the parts becomes clear through their juxtaposition. There is no apparent logical link from the first stanza to the second, yet the second stanza is a commentary on the first because it is placed after it. And the same is true of the final couplet in relation to each of the stanzas. The surprise, the violence, lie in just that ; the juxtaposition of these apparently unrelated images; and not in the presentation of the images themselves.

The poem begins with a very moving and suggestive image :

"Notre histoire est noble et tragique

Comme le masque d'un tyran"

The image may be original but its form is perfectly traditional. The next three lines may be slightly obscure, but they are in no way violent :

"Nul drame hasardeux ou magique

Aucun détail indifférent

Ne rend notre amour pathétique"

The pathos of their love affair does not derive from anything except its really tragic dimensions. Then comes the next stanza, based on a draft of two lines omitted from the "Chanson du Mal-Aimé" (2), which evokes Thomas de Quincey drugging himself with opium in order to find again the memory of his lost love Anne :

(1) O.P., p. 148

(2) cf. Déc., p. 218

"Et Thomas de Quincey buvant
L'opium poison doux et chaste
A sa pauvre Anne allait revant"

To the clear mask of classical tragedy in verse one is opposed the blurred and pitiful attempt to escape reality through drugs. But the stanza closes on two lines which seem to equate the two conflicting images :

"Passons passons puisque tout passe
Je me retournerai souvent"

All is ephemeral, therefore the experience of dream or drug is to be equated with the clearest apprehension of reality.

And now the final couplet brings us back to the title and also shows that the images of the first and second stanzas are of equal value as memory cannot be trusted to preserve experience in any case. (Surely the final proof if it were needed of Apollinaire's belief in the discontinuity of the human personality).

"Les souvenirs sont cors de chasse
Dont meurt le bruit parmi le vent"

Again the image is perfectly traditional, perhaps not even original, yet the structure of the poem makes it profoundly original. It is another example of a poem whose meaning is to be found only in the "jeu d'images" ; in the fact that the images bear no apparent relation to one another and hence provide the source of the poem's energy in their conflict.

When we compare this poem with the short lyric, "La Tzigane", of similar length and of similar theme we have a perfect demonstration of the evolution which Apollinaire's poetry has undergone. This poem may contain images which are surprising or mysterious :

"Et l'oiseau bleu perdit ses plumes" (I)

- but on the whole it functions in an entirely traditional way; the imagery illustrating the theme, very successfully, in a way which depends upon the reader's sensibility grasping their significance and feeling the sadness of the poem. Whereas the poems which depend on the techniques of violence force the reader's imagination to make unaccustomed leaps to link one thing with another, or present him with an image so unexpected that he cannot control the poem, but is forced to allow the imagery to act upon his imagination in its own way.

In this period, then, which follows the very ambitious poems of 1907/8, we find no poems of comparable ambition and although we find the ever-present readiness to accept and try out new ideas (Unan^{im}ism) we also find the equally constant refusal to write poems according to any programme. The calm confidence of the tone of the "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon" would seem to be justified by the way in which the poet has developed the techniques of violence so that whole, and wholly successful, poems now depend upon them. If these poems are at first sight varied enough, we can, however, discern a certain continuity of themes in most of them : a quest for self-knowledge which is (inevitably) in Apollinaire's case linked to the love of a woman - whether she be real or imagined, lost or newly found - or even seen only in passing.

CHAPTER TWO : SECTION SIX

"ZONE"

In this section there remains only "Zone" to be discussed. There are several reasons for discussing this poem apart from the others which may have common points of inspiration and imagery ; the principal of these is that Apollinaire has often been accused of degrees of plagiarism in the writing of this poem, ranging from the essay by the Belgian, Robert Goffin (1), according to which, "Zone" was directly inspired by Cendrars' poem "Pâques à New York", to the much more reasoned and reasonable examination of Madame Durry which shows that while it is possible that Apollinaire was influenced by Cendrars' poem, it was only superficially and that the modernity of "Zone" lies in characteristics that are unquestionably typical of Apollinaire (2). More recently, Marcel Adéma, in his rewritten biography of Apollinaire (3), goes so far as to state :

"Il est certain maintenant que "Zone" ne fut pas composée après les "Pâques"."

The irrefutability of the proofs which Adéma puts forward is perhaps not complete, but nevertheless, a careful examination of the poem shows that the truth lies definitely in that direction, although it may not be possible to be any more positive than is Madame Durry, who appears to be referring to the same evidence as Adéma. All that we have had to say about violence and its develop-

(1) Entrer en Poésie, (Gand) 1948, A l'enseigne du chat qui pêche

(2) cf. Durry, t.I, pp. 235 et seq.

(3) cf. Adéma (68) pp. 224 et seq.

-ment in Apollinaire's work to date, has pointed to originality of technique corresponding to the character of the poet and to his conception of the world. In this section we shall show that this is also true of "Zone", and that therefore it is most unlikely that any possible influence of Cendrars could have been of any great importance in the composition of this poem which Apollinaire chose to put in a position of prime importance in his volume, and that after the publication of "Pâques".

In addition to these authorities we might add that it is obvious to anyone who has heard or read the text of Cendrars' radio conversations (1) that he preferred the picturesque to the true when relating any story (2), as can be deduced from the restrained footnote in Marcel Adéma's biography concerning the death of Apollinaire and Cendrars' version of the story (3).

Let us now pass to an examination of "Zone" in which we shall endeavour to isolate the elements of violence in the poem and point out their importance to the structure as a whole. The poem begins

(1) Blaise Cendrars Vous parle, Oeuvres Complètes (Denoel) t. 8, 1965.

(2) On the occasion of a visit to the archives of the Maison de la Radio we had the opportunity to speak to a producer who had known Cendrars and had interviewed him on more than one occasion. We were offered the opinion that Cendrars often when telling a story allowed himself to forget the truth totally in the interests of the "artistic" effects of his anecdote and frequently ended by believing himself what he had said.

(3) cf. Adéma (68), p. 341 n.

on a statement which, being the first line of poetry in the volume, carries the value of a poetic credo :

"A la fin tu es las de ce monde ancien"

The statement offers immediate links with the title of the poem ; the "Zone" may be either this old world of which the poet is proclaiming himself to be tired (for ^{the} tone of the first line is unquestionably that of dialogue with self) or, perhaps, the zone into which he has passed on leaving the old world, an act of which the first line may be the herald. But even with these possibilities of meaning clear from the beginning the line has a certain surprise value, the "A la fin" lending it the tenor of a sigh that seems more appropriate to the end of a meditation than to the beginning, and perhaps because it seems to carry as well the implication that there is somewhere else for the poet to go. (One can also appreciate Apollinaire's delight in beginning his first published collection with these words.) That somewhere (the zone?) would by implication be not only what is to follow in this poem, but in the whole of the volume, as the choice of position of this poem is ascribable neither to chronological order nor to lack of intention on the poet's part. (1)

The manuscript which is contained in the notebook begun under the title "Année Républicaine" offers two variants of this first line (2) :

"Je n'ai jamais vécu que dans un monde ancien"

- this version is scored out, and :

"Je suis écœuré de vivre en ce monde ancien"

(1) cf. Ch.2, last section.

(2) cf. Déc., p.77

- both of which make it clear that the poet's intention was to begin his poem with a renunciation of the old world and which seem to be situated on either side, as it were, of the final version; the former being a more direct statement of fact about the situation, the latter being more concerned with the expression of the poet's feelings, in this case much stronger than the feelings with which the poet leaves us in his final version. The disgust of the manuscript version gives way to weariness in the final version. From this weariness it is no less surprising to go on to the humour of the next line, but indeed even more effective:

"Bergère ô tour Eiffel le troupeau des ponts bête ce matin" (1)

The shock and surprise of this line resolve themselves in humour, we have no choice but to laugh. The "Bergère" following on the note of the "monde ancien" makes us think of a shepherdess such as one finds in the pastoral lyrics of the eighteenth or seventeenth centuries, and no sooner is this image evoked than we are forced to accommodate it with the Eiffel tower. There is no word of comparison, no expression to make a simile, nothing but the juxtaposition of these two really incongruous elements, which forces us to identify the two. André Billy in his introduction to the *Oeuvres Poétiques* (2) has spoken of Apollinaire as a baroque poet; and M. Décaudin has reminded us (3) of Hugo's line -

"Le pâtre-promontoire au troupeau de nuées"

-but in neither the baroque conceit nor in the line from Hugo do

(1) O.P. p. 39

(2) pp. XLIV-XLV : without reference to this line, it is true.

(3) Cf. Dec., p. 77. The line should read : "... au chapeau de nuées".

we find what is obviously the basis of Apollinaire's image - the sudden identification of two disparate elements which makes the reaction of the reader inevitable - laughter. Faced with the juxtaposition of two elements which we cannot assimilate one to the other and yet have to, the only possible reaction is laughter; whereas with Hugo's image there is a precise point of similarity which enables us to accept the image, even if we do find a degree of humour in it; and whereas with the baroque conceit humour is not at all the desired result.

In this image Apollinaire is trying to make us aware of how ridiculous it is to try to live in the modern world while thinking or writing in terms of the past. This image is exactly the same kind of image as that crucial one discussed at length in the section dealing with "Les Fiançailles" -

"C'est la lune qui cuit comme un oeuf sur le plat"

- that is to say that the poet is bringing together two completely disparate objects, which shocks us, not in order to reveal some hidden similarity between them, whether we equate this with a Platonic truth or reality or not, but to make us aware of the difference which exists between them.

The force of the image lies in its compression, its simple juxtaposition, the result of which is the identification of the two objects, and through this we become aware of the ridiculous nature of the ancient world where it ^{is} used as a means to the understanding of the experience of modern man. The comparison of the Eiffel tower overlooking the bridges of the Seine to a shepherdess overlooking her flock rests on a minimal similarity, like the image from "Le Voyageur" - "Cavalerie des ponts . . .". In fact one might say that the image reduces the elements which it presents to us to

a kindeef visual skeleton, as it were, in which a vertical line represents the tower/sheperdess, and a series of horizontal lines represent the sheep/bridges, but when we try to see one in terms of the other, the inevitable result is surprise and laughter, although this in no way prevents the image from functioning in a serious manner. (This is also true of the image quoted above from "Le Voyageur", in which the common factor seems to be a kind of arch, and of the image from "Les Fiançailles"- "C'est la lune qui cuit comme un oeuf sur le plat", in which the common factor would seem to be a circle.) (1)

Now the next line takes this identity of the old world and the present world as a fact in saying-

"Tu en as assez de vivre dans l'antiquité grecque et
romaine"

-when it is clear to us that the poet is not living in ancient Greece or Rome. Putting ourselves in the position of a reader of the first edition of the first volume by a contemporary, we can see no reason for the poet saying that he lives in a world of Greek and Roman antiquity, especially when he has already mentioned the Eiffel tower. We can see no reason that is unless the poet is speaking of a way of looking at the world, rather than of the world itself. (We surely do not see simply a banal reference to the classical and neo-classical decoration of Paris).

(1) Couffignal makes a similar point about the image from "Zone" in his analysis of the "montée au Ciel" in the

'"Zone" d'Apollinaire' p. 5 (Archives Guillaume Apollinaire n°4)

And so we find in the first few lines of the first poem the externalisation of the poet's feelings that is typical of his poetry. Thus the zone of the title may be an area as much metaphorical as real; it may be as much the poet's feelings about the world as the world itself.

The fourth line continues the description of the contemporary world as old-

"Ici même les automobiles ont l'air d'être anciennes"

--and again the detail employed could not to the contemporary reader be one which proved the point, but on the contrary one which indicated even more plainly that the poet was not speaking objectively. In this case the poet is using the surprise image to contradict the sense of his words; no man of 1913 could possibly consider motor cars to be ancient, and so would be surprised by the line, eventually realising that the poet could not be speaking about the external world in a purely objective fashion.

On top of this the next two lines come as an even greater contradiction in terms, and even greater surprise-

"La religion seule est restée toute neuve la religion

Est restée simple comme les hangars de Port-Aviation "

The poet has chosen the oldest possible aspect of civilisation and declared it to be the newest, (and vice-versa) comparing it for simplicity to simplest form of shelter (and yet the most modern) which probably existed in Paris at this time, the airfield hangars. But what more unexpected, what more astonishing comparison could he have chosen? Nor is the image entirely free from the suspicion of blasphemy.

Clearly, Apollinaire's intention in this poem is to shock us ; to establish in our imaginations a series of images which contradict all our normal apprehensions of reality. And so, possibly,

the zone of the title will at least contain the zone of new experience to which the poet will introduce us in his poem.

The next paragraph, (this is perhaps the best description of the verse groupings which Apollinaire uses in this poem), plunges into the theme of modernism, and in the terms of the things which the poet considers modern perhaps throws an ironic light upon the references to religion, or, perhaps the fact that the poet feels himself detached from religion, unable to confess his sins, indicates that however modern Christianity might become it is still irrelevant to him although he is never free from its temptation.

"Et toi que les fenêtres observent la honte te retient

D'entrer dans une église et de t'y confesser ce matin"

As yet we cannot quite fathom the poet's feelings towards religion, but already we have an idea of their complexity arising from the ambiguity of lines like the above in which the shame the poet feels could be either the shame of the sinner or the shame of the atheist who is still tempted by the consolations offered by religion. In this poem as in many of the others which depend upon the aesthetics of surprise and violence we find mystery and ambiguity going hand in hand with the shock image. The next two lines have very definitely the form of an artistic, as well as poetic, manifesto and no-one reading them can fail to see the germ of the calligrammes already present .-

"Tu lis les prospectus les catalogues les affiches qui
chantent tout haut

Voilà la poésie ce matin et pour la prose il y a les
journaux"

The shock value of these lines may have been somewhat diminished for us by the fact that they became the credo of at least one movement

in the arts since the death of Apollinaire, but we must not underestimate the effect that they had at the time of their publication, especially appearing on the first page of the volume.

The idea that poetry is to be found in the world around one and not in any "poetic" form of expression or sentiment is, then, the modernism which is opposed to the old world, the world of pastoral imagery.

The next paragraph takes up this idea, in its language as well as in the objects named; we have no way of checking this, but these lines probably contain the first use of a word like "sténodactylographe" in poetry! There is no attempt to make the street seem what it is not, the poet recognises the note of a strident vulgarity that is present-

"Les inscriptions des enseignes et des murailles

les plaques les avis à la façon des perroquets criaillent"

-and yet he says that he loves the grace of this street-

"J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle"

The violence that is done here to the reader's sensibilities is exactly that which the scene itself would do to them, especially if the reader were, like the poet, sensitive enough to find the beauty that is in the scene. Of course, the shock also arises from the fact that the poet is saying that he likes the scene he is describing, and from the implications of the passage which are that the scene described is the epitome of modern beauty as the newspapers and posters, catalogues and prospectuses are the poetry and prose of the modern age. There is also the implication that, having chosen these things the poet has cut himself off from the world, and the only part of the old world, for which he has confessed his lassitude, which has remained modern enough to tempt him, is Christia-

nity. In that case, the "grâce de cette rue industrielle" has become for the poet an alternative to religion. This is consistent with the conception of the nature of human experience which is the basis of "Le Voyageur", for if the poet were to return to his Christian faith, then although he would not be granted the secret of life, he would not have to weep as he knocked on the door, for he would believe that that secret was in the hands of Christ in whom he would have placed his trust.

Thus the next section begins -

"Voilà la jeune rue et tu n'es encore qu'un petit enfant"

Is this not the expression of some kind of opposition; on the one hand the "jeune rue", on the other, the poet as a child, i.e. when he still believed in Christ? The application of the adjective "jeune" to the street surely makes this opposition clearer and more poignant-the street is the symbol of a new acceptance of life, which is young, but young in the sense that it is new rather than in the sense that it is innocent and pure. Thus the next passage is an evocation of the purity of the faith of the poet's childhood and the name which the poet introduces in the third line of the paragraph is really the name of his oldest friend, his childhood companion, to whom "Calligrammes" was to be dedicated, posthumously.

From line thirty-three to line thirty-nine the poet builds up to a climax using a construction which recalls the litany, repetitive to an almost hypnotic point and denominating aspects of religion-

"C'est le beau lys que tous nous cultivons

C'est la torche aux cheveux roux que n'éteint pas le vent

C'est le fils pâle et vermeil de la douloureuse mère

C'est l'arbre toujours touffu de toutes les prières.

C'est la double potence de l'honneur et de l'éternité

C'est l'étoile à six branches

C'est Dieu qui meurt le vendredi et ressuscite le dimanche"

-the last line is a climax of religious belief, the dividing lines between Christians and non-Christians, the mystery of the resurrection of Christ, and it is followed by one of the most daring and effective of all Apollinaire's blasphemous images-

"C'est le Christ qui monte au ciel mieux que les aviateurs

Il détient le record du monde pour la hauteur"

The icon is shattered, the faith of childhood is destroyed, Christ is no longer a God who died to save mankind and ascended to Heaven, but the holder of the world altitude record! Which is in its way, a very modern blasphemy and ^{-not-}inappropriate to the poem.

The next ²paragraph begins with two very strange lines-

"Pupille Christ de l'oeil

Vingtième pupille des siècles il sait y faire"

Mme. Durré has suggested that there is a pun here on Christ and "cristallin" (1), but puns are only effective in poetry when they are obvious, otherwise one of the meanings escapes- at least this is true of Apollinaire's poetry.(2) These two mysterious lines offer a multiplicity of meanings, none of which can completely exhaust their possibilities. They remain mysterious and surprising. There is, however, an interpretation which parallels the ideas of "Les

(1) Durré, TL, p.287

(2) Cf. J.C. Chevalier, Apollinaire et le calembour; Europe nov-déc 1966 pp.56-75: "(le calembour ne vit que de contextes soulignés.)"

Fiançailles" , "Le Voyageur" and the other important poems of the period; that is that the pupil of the eye, its centre, is here being equated with Christ the centre of Christian religion, and that each is being equated with an historical view-point in the second of the two lines. Thus the eye, through which we observe the world, and Christ, through whom Christians come to see the world, are now both brought into the context of the twentieth century -

"Et changé en oiseau ce siècle comme Jésus monte dans l'air"

In what sense may this century be said to be rising into the air? In the sense that it is the century of the aeroplane, and also in the sense that a century, seen in retrospect presents a certain view of man, and the present century, at the time of composition of this poem, was just beginning and so the view of man which the twentieth century is to present is just becoming visible . And so we see three things which give us a conception of reality, the eye, Christianity, and the historical viewpoint represented by the new century, rising into the air to survey what is below, the world and its inhabitants. There is also the implication that since the eye gives a false view of reality then so does Christ -this even more obvious to the reader who is aware that Apollinaire is the champion of the cubists.

Now the poet presents Christ from the point of view of the demons in Hell-

"Ils crient s'il sait voler qu'on l'appelle voleur"

-but the fact that these words are put into the mouths of devils detracts neither from the seriousness of their content nor from their ability to shock. (The obviousness of the pun here should be an indication that Apollinaire did not really intend the pun Mme. Durry has suggested in the first line of this paragraph.)

What Christ has stolen from the poet is his innocence and also perhaps his childhood, since the faith of the child is one thing that separates him from the man.

But now the lines which follow present us with a problem—

"Icare Enoch Elie Apollonius de Thyane

Flojtent autour du premier aéroplane"

—for if we identify the beings named in the first line of the above quotation with the angels mentioned in the preceding line, then we are forced to identify Christ with the first aeroplane! On the other hand it is more likely that they are not to be identified with the angels and that therefore we have two distinct and consequently opposing groups in the sky. Therefore the modernism of religion is a spurious modernism. Or it is possible that in identifying Christ with the aeroplane Apollinaire is himself modernising Christ, that is to say raising to the level of a God the twentieth century; but as it is essentially the twentieth century as seen by Apollinaire, his conception of it, then what the poet is in fact doing is equating himself with Christ so that the tableau which follows is the celebration of the consciousness of the poet/Christ. The "volante machine" is the modern consciousness, the poet its personification.

From these sublime heights the next paragraph drops the reader into the depths of a real despair. There is a total rupture in both tone and content. For the first time the theme of unrequited love is introduced into the poem; and if the interpretation which we have given of the above passage is valid, as we think, then the shock which this transition causes us is so much the greater.

"Maintenant tu marches dans Paris tout seul parmi la foule"

The crowd of flying creatures surrounding the triumphant poet has

become the crowd of the city streets among which he is isolated and lonely.

"L'angoisse de l'amour te serre le gosier

Comme si tu ne devais plus être aimé"

The reason for the sudden plunge is made explicit. If the poet has Christ-like attributes, he is still human and still liable to be wounded by love.

Now the next lines give a much more personal twist to the temptations of the consolations of religion-

"Siⁱ tu vivais dans l'ancien temps tu entrerais dans un monastère

Vous avez honte quand vous vous surprenez à dire une prière"

The change of person distances the poet's self; increases his objectivity in speaking about himself. So the poet brings out the contrast between his temptations (first line) and his determination to remain modern (line two). The next line expresses the constant nature of the conflict as the poet returns to the second person singular and laughs at himself as he mentions almost in passing the fear of hell which must have been a reality to him at some time in his life as he passed from a devout child to a non-believing adult-

"Tu te moques de toi et comme le feu de l'Enfer ton rire pétille

Les étincelles de ton rire dorent le fond de ta vie"

-but the sparks, the ephemeral points of light and fire, that arise from this conflict light up the poet's memories. (One is reminded of the "girande" in the final section of "Les Fiançailles").

Now, suddenly the poet freezes his past, and looks on it as objectively as on a portrait-

"C'est un tableau pendu dans un sombre musée

Et quelquefois tu vas le regarder de près"

This sudden immobility contrasts sharply with the exalted motion of the previous paragraph. But the idea of the past as something fixed in an image which may be dispassionately examined fits in with the conception of this poem, as the poet chooses various details from his past and integrates them into the structure of the poem.

The composition of the poem is becoming clear to us; it is the new familiar pattern of composition by juxtaposition of blocks which conflict with one another, of images which change rapidly from one thing to another, of abrupt changes of tone.

Now the poet brings us right up into the present, joining the opening view of Paris to that of the preceding paragraph where he first introduced the theme of "l'angoisse de l'amour"-

"Aujourd'hui tu marches dans Paris les femmes sont
ensanglantées
C'était et je voudrais ne pas m'en souvenir c'était au
déclin de la beauté"

The sudden externalisation of the poet's feelings that takes place in the adjective "ensanglantées" introduces a note of bitterness as distinct from the note of pain and suffering that is present in the preceding paragraph. But the next line is far more surprising to us; if the decline of beauty is situated in the past it means that it has already disappeared from the world. However, the juxtaposition of these two lines associates the disappearance of beauty with the women described in the first line; and therefore we see that the beauty which has disappeared is a beauty that the poet believed in-the fidelity of women.

The next paragraph returns to the theme of religion but with a vulgarity that recalls the cheap icons of places of pilgrimage, nevertheless the poet describes his sufferings from love rather than the temptations toward religion as-

"L'amour dont je souffre est une maladie honteuse"

and the persistence of the image, of love itself or of the woman who has left him, is what makes him continue to live in anguish and prevents him from sleeping at nights-

"Et l'image qui te possède te fait survivre dans
l'insomnie et dans l'angoisse"

-where this description would seem more appropriate to the pulling towards Christianity that he feels. Out of this intermingling of the two themes arises the idea that the poet is identifying them as the same thing, and the happiness which has evaded him in profane love, he sees as exactly the same as the happiness of sacred love, each of which is still a strong temptation to him but which he rejects. Thus the image which pursues him is ambiguous-

"C'est toujours près de toi cette image qui passe"

-the Virgin or a lost love!

What now follows is a sequence of memories, situations from the poet's past all brought into the present by the vivid "te voici", or use of the present tense. Throughout the sequence is the implication of the presence of this image which is the source of the poet's anguish; he seems to be saying, "I was here and there and here and here, and always there was the image which haunts me".-

"Nous regardons avec effroi les poulpes des profondeurs

Et parmi les algues nagent les poissons images du Sauveur"

The Mediterranean, scene of his childhood, and the image of Christ.

"Et tu observes au lieu d'écrire ton conte en prose

La cétoine qui dort dans le coeur de la rose"

His travels in Europe and the unhappiness of his love for Annie
was to bring him (1)-

"Epouvanté tu te vois dessiné dans les agates de Saint-Vit

Tu étais triste à mourir le jour où tu t'y vis"

A religious experience which brought sadness and fear.

And so on; the Dutch girl who is unfaithful to her fiancé,
his arrest in Paris which led to the religious poems written in the
Santé. All these temptations, all these experiences are brought
together to be simultaneously present, just as the poet's past
sufferings through love are identified with his present-

"Tu as souffert de l'amour à vingt et à trente ans"

But the poet now appears to have attained some kind of wisdom from
his sufferings, some degree of self-knowledge-

"Tu as fait de douloureux et de joyeux voyages

Avant de t'apercevoir du mensonge et de l'âge"

The lie may be the lie of religion or the lie of love, most likely
it is both. Now the poet has reached a point where all his feel-
ings, all his problems are present, and this is translated by the
switching of pronouns, so rapidly that the reader cannot escape the
image of the poet both past and present in simultaneous presence b
before him-

"Tu n'oses plus regarder tes mains et à tous moments je
voudrais sangloter

Sur toi sur celle que j'aime sur tout ce qui t'a
épouvanté"

(1) One is reminded of Blake's "O rose thou art sick".

The weariness of the beginning of the poem has become a much more profound self-pity and the implication of possible escape to another world has disappeared entirely. We are prevented from rejecting the poet's self-pity as a shallow emotion by the violence of the technique employed and also by the profundity that is added through the dimensions of religious experience.

There follows an evocation of emigrants in the Gare Saint-Lazare which recalls the poem "L'Emigrant de Landor Road", and the forlornness of their hopes is translated in lines such as this-

"Ils espèrent gagner de l'argent dans l'Argentine"

-which seems to leave us no choice but to see them as naïve, and by extension the poet as naïve also, should he hope to escape his difficulties through travelling. Thus we find ourselves reconsidering the area designated by the Zone of the title; it is a zone through which the poet is travelling an emotional zone seen at times as a real geographical one. In this respect the "Zone franche" of the Jura between France and Switzerland and containing elements common to both- might well have provided the title for the poem (1)- for constant in "Zone" is the opposition between old and new, faith and lack of it, love and betrayal etc.-the impression of a middle ground between a future that is nowhere made clear in the poem and a past/present that is felt overwhelmingly, is strong.

The futility of trying to escape is brought out in the line-

"Cet édreton et nos rêves sont aussi irréels"

-in which the reality of the eiderdown is transposed into the

(1) On this point see Adéma(68) pp. 205-206.

domain of unreality as it is a symbol of what the emigrants are trying to take with them from their old life to the new, but we can no more take what we want from our past than we can make our dreams real. Nor, it is apparent, can Apollinaire take his childhood faith into the future. The past dictates itself through our memories. The following fragments are proof of this as the poet, in need of consolation is confronted by memories which only pain him, so that he exclaims-

"Et tu bois cet alcool brillant comme ta vie
Ta vie que tu bois comme une eau-de-vie"

And so the poem ends in solitude and self-pity, but a self-pity which is ennobled by the poet's capacity to feel pity for others-

"J'ai une pitié immense pour les coutures de son ventre"

Dawn is approaching, the tinkling of milk-cans gives a tinny echo to the "cloche rageuse" of the industrial street at the beginning; then suddenly the poet inserts the lines-

"La nuit s'éloigne ainsi qu'une belle Métive
C'est Ferdine la fausse ou Léa l'attentive"

-of course, the identity of the women mentioned is not revealed to us, but this does not prevent us from seeing them as symbolic of the women who have betrayed the poet. The particularity which the poet introduces by naming the women is simply an element of surprise.

The poem draws to a close with a picture of the poet returning home to sleep among his "inferior-Christ", his statues which have lost their deity and are no longer tempting. But the end of the poem comes with an image which is the most powerful in the poem.

The regularity of versification disappears, all attempt at form and logical connection disappear also-

"Adieu Adieu

Soleil cou coupé"

The image of the rising sun is juxtaposed with that of a decapitated neck; the traditional image of renewal, rebirth and hope is assimilated to an image of death and despair (1). The broken ^hythm created by the repetition of sounds produces an effect almost of incoherence. The poem ends upon a shock image which is evidence of the profound originality of Apollinaire not only in this poem but also in his style; for if M. Decaudin has pointed out that Hugo had written a line-

"Je regardais rouler cette tête coupée

-it lacks the devastating power of Apollinaire's image which is far more violent; violent not only in that it violates normal use of language, abolishing all syntactic links to create another kind of link that is unbreakable, but also violent in that it offers the reader no way of approaching it that could attenuate its strength. The physical proximity of words "soleil" and "cou coupé" is absent in Hugo, it is all that is present in Apollinaire.

Thus we see that "Zone" depends upon the aesthetics of violence as we have shown them to be elaborated in the poetry of Apollinaire from the time of composition of "l'Emigrant de Landor Road".

Therefore whatever we may consider the status of the poem to be in relation to Cendrars' "Pâques à New York" we cannot deny that it has its place in the line of Apollinaire's development at the time of its

(1) Dawn is also here assimilated to sunset; time past to time present

composition and so cannot be seen as a straightforward piece of plagiarism. There is nothing in Cendrars' poem to approach the violence of Apollinaire's. (1)

- (1) It is astonishing that Ceuffignal should not go further than he does in his assertions of the importance of the original elements of Apollinaire's poem (in ' "Zone" d'Apollinaire ' pp. 25-30). He also appears to ignore the evidence offered by Adema (op.cit.) and Décaudin (op.cit.) for the dating of the original manuscript of the poem.